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A

LETTER

TO

A FOREIGN NOBLEMAN,

ON THE

PRESENT SITUATION OF FRANCE,

Price Two Shillings and Sixpence,

LETTER

A FOREIGN NOBLEMAN



PRESENTED BY THE

Price Two Shillings and Sixpence

A
LETTER
TO
A FOREIGN NOBLEMAN,
ON THE
PRESENT SITUATION OF FRANCE,
WITH RESPECT TO
THE OTHER STATES OF EUROPE.

BY
F. P. PICTET, CITIZEN OF GENEVA.

Peu sentent leur état : leurs esprits égarés,
De ce grand changement sont encore enivrés.
Le plus vil citoyen, dans sa bassesse extrême,
Ayant chassé les rois, pense être roi lui-même.

VOLTAIRE. Brutus, Act I. Scene IV.

LONDON:
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MURRAY, Fleet Street.

1793.

LETTER

A FOREIGN NOBLEMAN

ON THE

PRESENT SITUATION OF FRANCE

WITH REFERENCE TO

THE OTHER STATES OF EUROPE



F. P. PICKERS

Presentment for the year 1844, and the
the grand chamberlain and other officers
in the collection, and in the collection
of the other states of Europe, and in the
collection of the other states of Europe.

LONDON:

THOMAS AGNEW & SONS, 15, N. B. ROAD, LONDON.

And sold by

General, Comptroller, and other officers, and
MURRAY, 15, N. B. ROAD, LONDON.

1844.

LETTER, &c.

SIR,

IT has long since been my intention, as it was my duty, to write to your Excellency: but some new uneasiness still arising, and affording no glimpse of hope, but what instantly vanished, I have hardly enjoyed a moment's peace of mind, to reduce to order my confused ideas. Shall I be more successful in my present endeavours? However faint that hope, one duty at least will be fulfilled; and your Excellency, I am persuaded, from the knowledge I have of the general sentiments of your mind, will pardon any incoherencies, into which, by the poignancy of my grief, I may be involuntarily hurried.

In what an age, alas! have we been fated to live? How often, whilst we looked with wonder on this awful period, so fruitful of events the most extraordinary and momentous, have we congratulated

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lated future historians, whose task it would be to record them? We were then very far from imagining that its close would be marked by a catastrophe, which would defy the pencil of Tacitus to paint in all its horrors.

You must remember, Sir, how often, in our different conversations on the troubles of Geneva, you have rallied me on the zeal with which I defended our magistrates, and on the sovereign contempt I expressed for those demagogues, who led the misguided citizens. It would be an insult to your understanding, to suppose you were serious. Your Excellency has too much discernment to admit the idea that a pure democracy could be calculated for any state, however narrow its extent; or could even subsist with efficacy. But this is a subject which it is dangerous to treat in a ludicrous manner. The generality of men are so ignorant, so impelled by their passions, and particularly their self-love, to embrace with avidity any flattering paradox, that the more enlightened and judicious ought to weigh with the most scrupulous nicety the sentiments they venture to profess on a subject, on which every man thinks himself qualified to form an opinion, although so few are competent to decide.

How much have those men to answer for, who, hurried on by enthusiasm, or attentive only to the gratification of their pride and ambition, have held out the most seductive lures to the multitude, by plausible arguments the most calculated to en-
flame

flame their minds; who, for the attainment of their private ends, have led them, step by step, from one degree of guilt to another, through a regular succession of the most atrocious villanies! How much have those statesmen and nobles to answer for, who, for want of a proper discernment, or judgement to regulate their conduct by the exigencies of the times, and from a puerile attachment to illusive prerogatives, have armed the factious with a power, to which they themselves have fallen the first victims! Will not posterity be surprized to hear, that not one man was to be found among them, of a commanding character, possessed of sufficient courage and personal consequence to form an union of the discontented, and, putting himself at their head, to have seasonably interposed, and checked that general disorganization, the rapid progress of which might have been easily foreseen, but whose consequences are now beyond the reach of human apprehension? Above all, how culpable is that minister, so puffed up with his own vanity and conceit, whose equivocal conduct must have made him suspected of concealing some sinister views, if his well-known character did not screen him from the imputation! Proud of a disinterestedness, which his affluent fortune rendered of little difficulty, he fondly imagined that a vain parade of words would command an influence over members, with whom he was wholly unacquainted; and neglected those numberless advantages, which his situation af-

forded him, of securing a majority in the assembly.* Too confident of his own powers, to take any steps of prevention, and destitute of that intuitive sagacity that should characterize a statesman, he could not perceive that his *Comptendu*, his book on the finances, his several disputes with M. Calonne, and the wrong measures of his predecessors, had so agitated the public mind, that nothing could prevent a total subversion of the state, but a firm and decided conduct, which would have insured the respect and obedience of the people. But he was too tenacious of his place, to perceive the moment that presented the only resource of saving the monarchy; to persuade his master to quit Versailles, and overawe the factious, by putting himself at the head of those subjects, on whose fidelity he could still rely.

If we feel ourselves shocked at the recital of those enormities, depredations, and massacres, which this desperate faction have committed, and

* It is no justification in Mr. Necker to say, that his virtue and delicacy did not permit him to avail himself of such expedients; that they were incompatible with his feelings. —I would ask him, if Mr. Pitt found himself in a situation to have a few millions at his own disposal; and if he employed them to bring Ireland to consent to such an act of union, as that which has consolidated Scotland and England, does he think that Mr. Pitt would be wanting to himself and to his own character, if he applied them to that use? He ought to know, that there is some little difference between the duties of an anchorite and those of a statesman,

find

find our minds impressed with horror at the fear of seeing them renewed, what will be the feelings of posterity, when they review those complicated barbarities? It is in vain to delude ourselves with false expectations; it will not be, till after the state has obtained some form of consistency, that the moral and physical effects of the revolution can be estimated. Dreadful as the present distresses are, they are not to be compared with those which may follow in their train; the consequences of a ruined commerce; of the loss of the colonies; the total fall of assignats; and of a general bankruptcy! To those who are versed in political œconomy, and who know that the proportion of capital which nourishes industry, fixes also that of population, I shall not appear to exaggerate in affirming, that were the computation made at the end of ten years, the population of France, (however difficult it may be at present to estimate its diminution) would be found from the fatal effects of these disastrous events, to have fallen to sixteen or eighteen millions.

However plausible may be the idea that has gone forth, and which even your Excellency, perhaps, may have entertained, that the pestilential source which gave rise to those deplorable systems, that so fatally poison the peace of Europe, exists in my unhappy country: I cannot dissemble my indignation, when I hear my countrymen stigmatized with the reproach of being the advocates and apostles of the revolution.

The explosion may have been hastened by those political disputes with which Geneva has been agitated from the beginning of this century.--- It is not improbable that the American war has matured an evil, which, in my opinion, however, owes its real origin to very different and more preponderating causes.

It is indeed considerably indebted for its success to the unremitted exertions of the CLAVIERES, the BIDERMANs, the GENUS, and other Genevese of that stamp, who are now become its leaders, or its most zealous satellites. Banished from Geneva in the year 1782, the objects of universal contempt and detestation, they never ventured to appear again in their native country; or if they returned, the public indignation did not suffer them to fix their habitation there. But the revolution has furnished them with the means of playing their favourite part, and armed them with the power of wreaking their vengeance against those honest citizens whom they regard as their personal enemies. To this insatiable thirst of revenge I attribute the storm now impending over us; and I am much afraid that nothing will appease their rage, but the introduction of those bloody scenes amongst us, of which Avignon and the Comtat have exhibited so tremendous a spectacle.* But with the exception of these desperate wretches, together with a few individuals whom they have seduced

* Those factious Genevese, who openly avow their iniquitous intentions, ought not alone to be the objects of the public

seduced, and some of the lowest dregs of the people, I can assure your Excellency, that the revolution has made on the minds of our best men, those whom we can truly call patriots, and our families, a just and lasting impression; and even the majority of those who have been recently admitted into the class of citizens, have invariably entertained the same opinion of it.

Many other causes of the revolution might be traced, which have hitherto escaped observation, if the present crisis of affairs left the mind sufficiently at ease to investigate them. Great stress is laid on the progress of knowledge; on the luxury and profligacy of manners; on the degeneracy of the public character—Politicians have insisted much on the insolence of placemen; the profusion of the court and its ministers; their flagrant abuse of power, and the wrong measures they pursued. These united circumstances cannot be denied to have accelerated this fatal eruption. But an atten-

public execration; there are others, too notorious to need mentioning, who do not deserve less contempt. Warm advocates of the revolution in its commencement, they did not blush to become the associates of the noted Mirabeau, and of that Claviere by whom they have been completely duped.—It is to them and to the opposition they gave to the arrangement which took place in 1789, that Geneva owes its present misfortunes; they have not changed, though they may dissemble their real principles; and, in spite of all their efforts, an attentive observer will easily detect them, through the mask of hypocrisy which they assume.

tive observer will, I am persuaded, fix his eye on causes of a superior and antecedent agency, tending to produce a revolution, which might be hastened indeed, but not effected, by the irretrievable disorder in the finances, which the reign of Louis XIV. the regency of the Duke of Orleans, and the reign of Louis XV. introduced, and which created the indispensable necessity of convoking the States General. If I were called upon to analyze this subject, I should examine what have been the moral effects of the invention of printing. I should consider in how pernicious a degree the extension of commerce, and the progress of industry, have been impeded by the shameless venality of places; what a complexion the French character has received from it, and the wall of partition it has fixed between the Nobles and the Tiers Etat. These, I am confident, would be found the true causes of a revolution, unparalleled in the annals of history, and which, if the utmost vigilance is not used, threatens to carry its poisonous effects into the bosom of other countries, where democratical leaders find it much easier, than we are aware of, to disseminate and secure the reception of their principles.

This is not the moment for researches of this kind; although it would give me the highest pleasure to have some hours conversation on the subject with a person of your Excellency's enlightened understanding, were it but to enable me to correct my own ideas of the question. But since

we cannot recall the past, and since the mind finds itself forcibly impelled to the contemplation of the present circumstances, and of the probable means of checking the farther progress of this evil, it would afford me inexpressible satisfaction to know your Excellency's sentiments on the complexion of the present moment, when the unfortunate issue of the campaign, and General Dumourier's late victory, seem to leave free scope to the unbridled fury, and mad ambition of the members of the National Convention.

It would but ill become me to attempt to penetrate into the causes of these disasters. It is for your Excellency alone, and the ministers of the different courts, to form a just idea of the real circumstances which have produced events so contrary to the general expectation. Unacquainted with the secret springs of action, and guided only by present appearances, the world is apt to attribute this failure to the French Princes and their party.

These men, who at the beginning, blind to the necessity, which the public opinion imposed upon them, of submitting to the sacrifice of some exclusive privileges, and inflexibly attached to the division of orders; by the futility of the means with which they proposed to break the opposition of the Tiers Etat, supplied the adverse faction with all the power they desired; and who, when they found their own party crumbling to decay, after tamely suffering themselves to be stripped of their
pos-

possessions, sought by flight alone a refuge against the malice of their persecutors. These men, we are apt to consider as the authors of that error and delusion into which the combined powers have fallen. They led them to believe that if they penetrated into France with a formidable army they would meet with no resistance; that the cities would eagerly throw open their gates to them; that the armies of the faction would disperse at their approach; that they would have the glory of liberating the King and the Royal Family, and of restoring peace to a nation which waited for them as its deliverers. But we presume that it surpassed their penetration to know, that what might have been easy two years before, was now become utterly impracticable. Had the Princes seized the moment for entering France, when the King attempted to save himself from the tyranny of his persecutors, perhaps the opportunity was not yet totally lost, and it is possible that without foreign assistance they might have effected a counter-revolution. But the Jacobins, since the events of the tenth of August, by the total annihilation of their antagonists, have accumulated into their own hands the united forces of the whole kingdom, and are now at liberty to employ them without obstruction against their external enemies. At present, every inch of ground must be disputed; by regular approaches only can France be invaded. Let a solid footing be once secured on the frontiers, and every fortified place be successively

carried, and then some effectual support may be afforded to those secret partisans, who, fluctuating between hope and fear, dare not openly declare themselves, but wait with anxious expectation till their party can have acquired a decided superiority in the kingdom. Whatever foundation there may be for these opinions, it is not my intention to examine them at present. I only request your Excellency will grant me a few moments indulgence, whilst I take a hasty survey of the present aspect of affairs, and point out the means of checking this formidable evil, and of curbing, if possible, those ambitious views, which, whatever may be affirmed to the contrary, now occupy the minds of the democratical leaders.

Disgusted at the consequences of an enterprize in which he has to lament the loss of the flower of his army, the King of Prussia might be tempted to listen to the insinuations of the National Convention, who, without doubt, will leave no means untried to engage him either to an alliance, or to a separate peace and a strict neutrality. But whatever countenance these insinuations may derive from the unforeseen calamities of this campaign, and the rapid and important advantages of GENERAL DUMOURIER, yet some reasons of a more cogent nature should induce the Cabinet of Berlin instantly to reject them. For if we examine with an attentive eye the invariable conduct of the leaders of the republican party, by what principles and maxims they have been constantly

stantly actuated, and what line of conduct their present situation demands of them, no one will hesitate to pronounce that they are, in their nature and their very essence, the enemies of every Government of Europe. Their subjugation it may, perhaps, be very difficult to effect; but it is become the essential interests of all the powers, to which every private consideration ought to yield, to compress them within the limits of France; to take from them the means of extending their arms and their principles into other countries; and to wait with calm expectation for that favourable moment, when their own intestine divisions bring about a change in the public opinion, and make the nation desirous of adopting sounder principles. Whatever abhorrence we may feel for the principles of the democratical leaders, were I to trace their conduct from the first meeting of the Etats Generaux to the present time, I know not which I should most admire, the dexterity with which they have built their own interest on the measures of opposing parties, or the sagacity they have displayed in calling forth and commanding the most propitious events, and turning them to their own immediate advantage. To your Excellency such a picture might afford an additional argument for detestation; but you must confess that men, who have constantly adhered to one line of pursuit, from which no circumstances have diverted them, will never be wanting to themselves; and that no words,

words, promises, engagements, or treaties, will be binding on men, who seem to have made this their established maxim, *Let heaven and earth perish, provided we and ours rise above the universal wreck !*

Not to enter into these unnecessary details, let us only cast a hasty glance over the actual state of the produce of taxes, the irremediable disorder of the finances, the immensity of their debt, the ill-judged and unproductive system of their ways and means, and the enormous expences of a war, which threatens to involve all Europe from every point of the frontiers to its remotest extremities : and if we add to this the indispensable necessity of maintaining a multitude of individuals, unprovided with labour ; of which a still greater number have, by long discontinuance, lost the power and the inclination ; these different considerations will, on the first glance, evince the urgent exigency of their situation ; and from the steps the democratical leaders have hitherto pursued, it will be easy to conjecture what hazardous measures they will in future be compelled to take.

In the beginning of the revolution, at that ever-memorable epoch, when a general spirit of commotion and revolt broke forth in Paris and the provinces, when the whole kingdom, by an irresistible impulse, rose up in arms, these men, who had undoubtedly formed their plan before the opening of the States, could not but easily perceive that the people had now gained the ascendancy ;

tendency ; and that, by flattering their passions, by magnifying their importance, and by keeping them in continual suspense between hope and fear, there was nothing which they might not prevail upon them to undertake. Their first attempt, therefore, was to destroy all subordination and respect for their officers in the regular troops, and to instil into the minds of the people the most violent hatred, not against royalty and the person of the king, (for it was then too early for the execution of that design) but against those persons who surround the throne, against the nobility, clergy, the magistrates, possessors of estates ; in a word, against every individual, whose consequence till then had commanded some degree of respect.

These men were held forth to the public eye in the most hateful point of view : they were represented as the authors of every abuse, as the source of those numerous grievances which they took a delight in exhibiting in the most unfavorable and exaggerated colours. It was indubitably with a view of affording some shadow of justice to this high colouring, and of securing the confidence of the nation, that the Constituent Assembly began its operations by abolishing the *gabelle*, *aides*, and a great number of other taxes, which were considered as oppressive and insupportable. The imposition of these taxes may have been ill-advised, and may have produced many inconveniencies ; but what wise government,
founded

founded on principles of mature deliberation, would have ventured on their indiscriminate suppression, without the previous substitution of others equally efficacious?

In the mean time some provision was to be made for the exigencies of the moment, becoming every day more urgent. It was necessary to organize, and to arm at a great expence, that multitude of national guards, on whose zeal and co-operation no reliance could be placed without a sufficient pay and subsistence. The division of subordinate authorities into several parts became necessary, that the multiplication of the number of officers might attach the greater number of individuals to the new order of things. Apprehensive also lest the monied people should become the declared enemies of the revolution, they determined to fix their attachment by presenting to their hopes pecuniary advantages, and by a religious observance of all their engagements. The debts of the State they had declared national debts; the property of government-creditors they had declared to be under the safeguard of the national faith: and it was now become highly necessary to confirm, by some solid and incontrovertible proofs, promises which otherwise would have appeared illusive. This artful policy gave birth, no doubt, to those memorable decrees, which declared the royal domains and ecclesiastical revenues to be national property; a policy, from which originated the création of assignats, and other mea-

measures of finance, which were taken at that period. And to their desire of affording some temporary relief to the people, and of feeding with additional fuel their animosity against the land-owners, must be attributed their abolition of all feudal tenures, their barefaced connivance, and even protection of those men who refused to buy some of those rights, which had been declared redeemable. From the same source, in short, must be derived those infamous decrees, which, by the suppression of the clause authorising redemption, have completed the ruin of the proprietors of fiefs. The relation of those detestable means which the heads of the Republican party employed to keep alive the effervescence of the people, and carry it to the greatest excess of enthusiasm, would be repugnant to your feelings. I shall not mention those dreadful devastations, those conflagrations and massacres, excited with no other view than to compel the wretched proprietors to leave their devoted country, whilst the perpetrators of these savage barbarities, far from meeting the punishment they deserved, enjoy the utmost consideration, and the most barefaced encouragement. I would pass in eternal silence the crimes of Avignon, which have shewn to how great a degree of depravity man can arrive, when he has thrown off the restraints of virtue and morality. But I shall chiefly confine myself to what relates to the finances, and shall request your Excellency to accompany me in a hasty review of those successive

effective measures, which the necessity of providing for the deficit in the revenue has extorted from them.

After the emission of assignats, and the sale of the royal domains, and ecclesiastical property; notwithstanding the arbitrary means used to raise their value, the insufficiency of this resource, to meet their still increasing exigencies, soon became apparent. And as it was beyond the reach of calculation to fix the quantity of assignats, which would be necessary for circulation, they were soon forced to have recourse to other expedients. The decree, which consigned the national property to public sale, had not been extended to the forests, the preservation of which had been deemed of some importance. In forming the new ecclesiastical constitution, common justice had dictated some indemnification to be made to the suffering clergy, whose benefices were suppressed; and pensions had been granted to that numerous class of both sexes, whom the abolition of monasteries had restored to society. Their mediocrity had fully justified the appellation of *alimentary pensions*. They had been, however, declared national debts, and their united magnitude formed an important object. But the forcible plea of necessity, by which the National Assembly had been impelled to alienate the forests, quickly removed the odium of injustice. They then proceeded to the imposition of oaths, at which both honour and conscience equally revolted. Stigma-

tized with the opprobrious name of refractory, the nonjuring priests were driven from their benefices, and persecuted by the blackest calumny. Exposed to every species of outrage, and to the malice of ruffians, industriously excited against them, they were left to the sad alternative of chusing between banishment and death. The total suppression of the pensions of the clergy was not deemed a sufficient sacrifice; by an act of barbarity, unexampled in the annals of tyranny, the property which these unhappy exiles had been forced to abandon, has been declared confiscated, and appropriated to the nation.

These are some of the means which the heads of the republican faction have, with shameless effrontery, employed, to answer the double purpose of multiplying places which they might bestow on their adherents, and of providing a new unappropriated fund, the application of which might retard the moment when the emission of assignats would be no longer practicable.

We must now consider the leaders of the republican party under another point of view; and their conduct in regard to all those, whom they have characterized by the general name of *Aristocrats*, will afford us a striking picture of the enormities of which they are capable, and will shew what may be expected from them in future.

It must be observed, in the first place, that they have comprehended under this denomination, not only that part of the nation which
might

might be considered as having some interest in the preservation of the ancient system; not only all those who were dependent on the court, as the ministers and the magistrates; not only that part of the nobility who peremptorily insisted on forming a distinct and separate body from the rest of the nation; but also all those who feeling the utmost abhorrence for abuses, and sincerely desiring a reform, were, nevertheless, fully sensible how important it was, that the executive power should possess sufficient authority to insure respect to the laws, and to maintain order and tranquillity in the state. Nor have they excepted those speculative innovators, who, actuated by metaphysical ideas of an imaginary perfection, vainly supposed they were establishing a limited monarchy, whilst, in reality, they only formed a code of anarchy and licentiousness. We must not forget, that after having excited the fury of the populace against the real aristocrats, they have found the secret of fixing the stigma of that dangerous appellation on persons of the most moderate principles; and that their last victims have been those enthusiasts, whose influence, under their direction, had governed the measures of the Constituent Assembly; but who, being inscribed on the fatal tablets of the sanguinary proscription, have found a voluntary exile to be their only refuge from the steel of their assassins.

A little reflection on the motives which seem to have dictated this conduct, will leave not a

shadow of doubt, that from the commencement of the revolution, it became their primary object, gradually to remove every one whose support, on all occasions, they could not implicitly rely; and as it was their chief desire to promote emigrations to the utmost of their power, they have neglected nothing to effect this purpose.

If they had contented themselves with stripping the nobility of their privileges; if, after the abolition of feudal rights, titles, and armorial distinctions, they had suffered them to languish in obscurity and solitude; if these barbarous proceedings had not kept them under continual alarm for their personal security; some few individuals, perhaps, might have quitted their country, but there is every reason to believe, that the greater part of those persecuted wanderers, whose sufferings excite the compassion of all Europe, would have been happy to have remained in the undisturbed possession of their peaceful homes. And, indeed, past events afford us sufficient proof, that the French nobility is far from possessing that energy of character, for which, in the reign of Charles I. the English nobility were so eminently distinguished.

But the submission of the nobles, of the military and navy, was not calculated to answer the intentions of the chiefs of the republican party. To feed the insatiable avidity of their associates, nothing could suffice but the indiscriminate expulsion of all who possessed places or property. A

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general emigration was necessary to enable them to establish funds, equal to the continual emission of new assignats. Hence those atrocious decrees, by which emigrants are condemned to exile, and their property confiscated. And all persons, of both sexes, and of every age, who may happen to be abroad, to whatever country they may have removed, and whatever conduct they may observe, are included in this fatal sentence.*

If ever we can obtain an exact account of the number and value of confiscated estates, the enormous mass of capital which this operation has thrown into their hands, will appear so astonishing, as to exceed any idea we now form of its probable amount.

A war was now become a necessary expedient to enable them to execute this project, and to rid themselves of those friends of the constitution, who were at last become sensible of the too great extension they had given to their principles; and who perceived, when it was too late, how dangerous were the means they had used to fix their new doctrines permanently on the minds of the

* It must, however, be confessed, that they have excepted from this general proscription, children under fourteen years of age, who, by returning to France, and fixing their residence there, obtain one-fourth of their father's property. There are several other unimportant exceptions.—We shall make no observations on this exception relative to children; more barbarous, if possible, than the decree of a general proscription.

people. I have now the fullest conviction, that the present war owes its real origin to the heads of the republican faction. It was, no doubt, equally desired by the party of the princes and the emigrants, as it was likely to engage the foreign powers in their cause. It is possible too, that the King was not averse to it, as it might furnish him with the means of extricating himself from long oppression. But I need not inform your Excellency, what visible reluctance the Cabinet of Vienna discovered; and what the manœuvres of the Jacobins were, by which the King found himself compelled to receive ministers devoted to their party, and suddenly to declare and begin the war.

Perhaps too, when they found themselves so completely duped by the Jacobins, whose influence over the populace gave immediate sanction to their measures, the constitutionists might hope, that if they were placed at the head of the armies, they might derive from the war the means of recovering their ascendancy. If such were their views, how egregiously have they been mistaken! The event has clearly shewn, that the republicans alone were interested in desiring a war, and that they alone have derived every advantage from it. The attempt to describe the means they have employed, would be a relation of horrors which are too well known to all. I shall confine myself to the present moment, and consider these republicans as having reached the pin-

pinnacle of greatness, when, having dispersed all their antagonists, and meeting with no farther resistance, they begin to assume the language of masters, and to exercise the power of dictating laws. I shall examine what line of conduct their present situation points out to them, and what steps imperious necessity compels them to pursue. It is impossible that the republican leaders should not sometimes turn their eyes towards their resources. They are sensible, that whatever ascendancy the people have acquired, whatever readiness they may at all times express to second their views, by the commission of every species of atrocity, it is the natural consequence of those ideas of sovereignty with which every care has been taken to flatter them.

Taught by artful insinuations, under the specious names of Liberty and Equality, to consider the most unbridled licentiousness as their right, and to entertain the most injurious ideas of every individual who had possessed some influence over them, the people have been led to consider the property of their superiors in the light of a public robbery; the comforts and even education of the rich as built on their own oppression, and the fruit of their accumulated miseries.

These ideas, by means of clubs and patriotic societies, were quickly propagated. They soon diffused, and acquired some consistency by means of those innumerable affiliated adherents, who were distributed in the departments, in the several

districts, the municipalities, the tribunals, and in the army and navy. Every thing has been hitherto favourable to their wishes. In some instances, the situation of the people has been really meliorated. The reiterated complaints of the ministers of finance could never procure effectual measures to enforce the payment of taxes, either preserved or imposed. In every part of the kingdom, the most atrocious crimes have been committed with impunity, and the perpetrators have found encouragement, and been even honoured with the title of patriots; the necessity of keeping up armies has furnished an opportunity for removing every turbulent and obnoxious character; there have not hitherto been wanting victims that could be persecuted, or crimes which could be perpetrated.

Means have been found of throwing upon some devoted individual, or some class of citizens, the odium of disturbing the public peace; and thus the people have been lulled into some kind of patient expectation, till the dispersion and extirpation of their enemies should leave them to the undisturbed enjoyment of that happiness, which, as they were led to believe, they could not fail to derive from the reign of liberty and equality.

Such are the measures which have seconded the views, and directed the aims, of the new teachers of mankind. The republicans have now the whole power in their own hands: the sovereignty
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of the people is at last confirmed : and they possess, under the name of a republic, the most complete democracy that every existed. Exile, imprisonment, proscriptions, and death, have silenced the voice of opposition, and the murmurs of discontent. In these circumstances what means are left to the chiefs of the faction, of preserving their ascendancy over the people ? They begin themselves to perceive the inconveniencies produced by anarchy and licentiousness ; they are displeased at the lofty tone of independence assumed by the Commons of Paris : those sanguinary monsters, the Marats and the Roberespieres, who have so long agitated the public mind, by constantly preaching up blood and carnage, begin to alarm them ; and though from them they have received the most important services, their next step, perhaps, will be to sacrifice them to public indignation. Let us suppose for a moment that peace is restored to France ; and that, distracted by its own intestine divisions, it has formed the resolution not to molest the internal tranquillity of surrounding governments. No delusion can conceal the melancholy truth, that the republicans will find themselves surrounded by an immense multitude, which, no longer diverted by other objects, will loudly demand those comforts, and that happiness, of which they have been taught so long to indulge the expectation. Are they ignorant that a constitution must be framed, and laws established, for a people taught to consider their own ratification
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of those laws as an imprescriptible and unalienable right, and to believe that they are only legal and obligatory in proportion to the public approbation and to the benefit derived from them? Do they not know that new factions must spring up, as long as there are men possessing sufficient inclination and ability to flatter and corrupt the people; that these new demagogues can employ no surer means of acquiring popularity than to surpass their predecessors in the violence of their fury? and thus they may be hurried with a dreadful rapidity to all the evils of an Agrarian law, and to that general subversion, the consequences of which ought the more to be dreaded by them, as they know from their own experience, how true that adage is, "that the people is a ferocious beast, which when once let loose, attacks every thing in its way with indiscriminate fury."

Let us suppose they had the good fortune to escape this danger; let us suppose that the war, though gradually relaxed in its rigour, continued one year longer; let us suppose, that before a general peace takes place, they had completed their labours and accomplished their ends, by forcing the people to accept the constitution; and that by means of the army, whose fidelity they had secured by an exorbitant pay, they were able to retain the rest of the nation in obedience; yet how many obstacles and dangers will they have to encounter; into what an inextricable labyrinth will they find themselves bewildered! Besides the difficulty and danger

danger of dismissing all those national guards, who, accustomed to the indolence of a military life, would very reluctantly consent to procure themselves a hard-earned subsistence by their own labour; besides the impossibility of retaining them, without exposing themselves to the violent outcry which the people would raise against that measure; is it not evident, that though peace was re-established, yet the disorder of the finances, and of the public revenue, would be the fatal rock on which they must at last inevitably split? And though it could be supposed that the gradual extinction of assignats in circulation could be effected by the sale of the royal domains, of ecclesiastical property, and of the estates of emigrants; though it could be supposed that they would finally resolve to declare a national bankruptcy, in order to lighten the weight of their insupportable burden; and though they could appease the dangerous commotion, which so desperate a measure could not fail of producing, especially in Paris; yet we must not delude ourselves with the idea, that even this last resource could bring the receipts on a level with the expenditure: and that a country, whose commerce is destroyed, and which has lost those great capitals destined to give life to manufactures and agriculture, could support the enormous weight of taxes proportionate to the exigencies of such a government, as they would

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be obliged to constitute.* Can it be supposed, that a people so long habituated to licentiousness, wrapt up in the conceit of their own sovereignty, and averse to all subordination, would patiently submit to pay them taxes, and would not rather consider those in the light of enemies, who would compel them to work, or whose property still remained the object of envy?

But even if we admit, that by means of a few signal punishments, they might keep the people in some kind of subordination, yet are they unacquainted with the disposition of the military. Are they not sensible that soldiers are brought at last to respect none but their officers? And that a set of obscure citizens, whose character is dignified neither by birth, rank, nor fortune, by no decoration or external splendor, might become the first objects of their scorn, and that sooner or later there might start up in the army a man of a bold and enterprising genius, who having had the art of attaching a certain number of partisans to his fortune, might shew them the same treatment, which the English parliament experienced from Cromwell, though he was indebted to it for his elevation and his fame.

* The fanatic partisans of republicanism would be much surprized, if it was demonstrated, as it could be easily done, that of all kinds of government, a democracy is the most expensive, and the least calculated to check the depredations of public officers.

War,

War, on the contrary, offers to the chiefs of the republican party the hope of either extricating themselves from these difficulties, or at least of delaying the fatal crisis, till they are enabled to secure their own personal interest.

Let it not be said, that the ruinous state of their finances will put it out of their power to support the enormous expences of a war, which having already carried its ravages into Germany, Flanders, and the frontiers of Italy, threatens to extend them to Switzerland and Spain; and will soon oblige the republic to employ a considerable naval force. Let it be still less imagined that they will experience a deficiency of men, to raise, or to recruit their armies. The profession of arms alone can flatter the enthusiasm of a people, elate with the idea of its sovereignty. There is now scarcely a Frenchman who does not think himself destined to the glorious task of combating tyrants, of breaking the chains of the human race, and of restoring it to freedom and happiness. They have, besides, through disuse, lost all relish for the arts of peace. But they find in an exorbitant pay, and in the other advantages which they enjoy, a mode of life peculiarly adapted to gratify their idleness and pride. There never will be felt a want of soldiers, as long as there are mad enthusiasts in France; and the hackneyed theme of tyranny and tyrants affords so easy a topic for the display of oratory, as warrants us to conclude from every

every circumstance, that many years will elapse, before this Colossus can be bowed to the ground.

As for money, they possess an inexhaustible mine in the resource of assignats—and as long as they can amuse the people with the seductive idea of carrying freedom, happiness, and the glory of the French name into every quarter of Europe, nothing will be so easy as to stifle the voice of the judicious few, who will sometimes be found, of sufficient courage to demand an inquiry into the actual state of the nation, its engagements and resources. The complicated cares of war will afford them a seasonable pretence for dismissing inquiries which would demand the strictest calculations. The business of estimating their resources will be left to the imagination, and they will not cease to issue new assignats, which even then will not suffer a very perceptible alteration in their value and in the courses of foreign exchange; especially while they retain at the head of their finance, a man who joins the utmost depravity of character, and a total want of principle, to eminent abilities, and penetration; and who has the art, by an extraordinary exertion of authority, to force the bankers to operations, that are diametrically opposite to those, which the course of trade would direct.*

* It would be too shocking to present the reader with a detail of that tyranny which Claviere exercises over the Parisian bankers—and as the relation might be fatal to the bankers themselves, I shall not disclose his infamous practices.

Your

Your Excellency, therefore, must not imagine, that the mad course of these republican leaders can be impeded by the disorder and intricacy of their finances. And it is not an unimportant advantage they derive from the war, that they can thus defer the moment when it will be found necessary to put them into some train of liquidation ; that they are thus enabled to turn the attention of turbulent spirits into a different direction ; to give some occupation to those who want employment ; and that they are thus furnished with the means of making themselves of some consequence, of increasing their popularity, of strengthening their credit, and of putting off the epoch, which they have so often promised, when the blessings of a perfect happiness are to be diffused over the whole world.

But whatever may be the real importance of these advantages, they fall very short of those which their fancy exhibits to their view. Let us follow them into the Low Countries ; figure them to your imagination as crowned with the most complete success, every city opening its gates to receive them, and the whole nation welcoming them as its deliverers. And may I be permitted to observe to your Excellency, that this event is by no means so extraordinary as might be imagined. The French troops are not despicable enemies : their enthusiasm and impetuosity will supply their want of discipline, which they are acquiring every day : they possess that confidence which has generally

rally proved the earnest of victory ; and whilst the present fermentation prevails every where, the success of one battle may have sufficed to put the whole country into their power. In this state of events, let your Excellency mark the conduct of the leaders of the republican faction : with what insidious arts they will frustrate the hopes of the ancient promoters of the Belgic disturbances, and, on the contrary, support the cause and insure the triumph of the democratical party. Can it be doubted that it will be the first request of the numerous societies of the friends of liberty and equality now forming in every city, and of the national convention, which will assemble at Bruxelles, that they may be united to the French Republic, and form but one nation, governed by the same laws and the same principles. In a country where almost the whole wealth and landed property is divided between the clergy and the fief-holders, it is not difficult to imagine, how numerous will be the victims, and to what extent depredations will be committed ! What augmentation of power will such an acquisition throw into the hands of the republican chiefs ! If to this it be added, with what transports this brilliant success would inspire them, how sensibly it would gratify their pride and self-love, and how abundantly furnish the means of keeping alive the effervescence of the French ; no doubt can be entertained, that no sacrifices can have been spared to insure the success of this enterprize.

Why have they shewn the Prussians the greatest marks of regard and benevolence; when the different manifestoes of the Duke of Brunswick must have impressed them with the most inveterate hatred? It is evident that they had hopes of obtaining a separate peace: and that, all their intrigues having proved fruitless to prevent the union of Vienna and Berlin, it has been their chief aim to seize an opportunity of effecting a rupture between the two Courts. However virulent may be their animosity against Sovereigns, however insulting the epithets which they deign to bestow upon them, and whatever tender solicitude they may profess for the welfare of the people, every thing induces us to believe, that if their artful insinuations could make any impression on the Cabinet of Berlin, they would gladly form an intimate alliance with that Court, and furnish it with the means of augmenting its preponderance, and of extending its possessions in Germany.

Is it possible the Prussian Cabinet should not see the snare, and should be insensible to its consequences? Is it possible it should not perceive how materially interested the republican leaders are in establishing themselves in the Low Countries, and how readily they would sacrifice every thing to their great project of uniting them to France, that they might dispose of their power and riches, with

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the same facility, with which they dispose of those of their own country.*

If they could obtain some influence over the Court of Berlin, if they could induce on it to turn its arms against the house of Austria, it is natural to suppose that they might for a time allow Germany a little interval to breathe, and confine themselves to a simple diversion. It is possible, and even not improbable, that after having firmly established themselves in the Low Countries, they might suddenly fall upon the United Provinces, where the patriots most ardently implore their support. It is credible that after having overthrown this government, and completed the triumph of the sovereignty of the people, and of anarchy, they would next invade the south of Europe, and spread desolation over Italy, Spain, and Portugal. But after the knowledge we have

* Let not those who observe the discontents that subsist in the Low Countries against the French, be surprized at it. Ignorant, superstitious, and fervilely attached to their priests, it is very natural that the Belgic people should be shocked at the conduct of men who deride religion and its ministers; and who openly declare their design of appropriating the property of the clergy and of the nobles to themselves: what is most astonishing, is, that the fanaticism of independence should have blinded them so far, as to prevent their foresight of what has happened: but they will severely suffer for it—we may appeal for it to the French. They will easily silence the discontented or compel them to fly—they will easily secure the triumph of the democratic party, which, though at present the least numerous in the Low Countries, will not blush to assume the title of the Belgic Nation.

of their character, after having seen to what lengths their ambition can lead them, can we suppose, when once the revolution was terminated in the south, that they would not carry their ravages into the north? Is it to be supposed that their treaties with Prussia could in the least restrain them? Is it not evident that they would find a thousand easy pretences to break them, and giving out that they were the favoured instruments of Providence to deliver mankind from the yoke of oppression, they would inundate all Germany with blood and devastation? A little reflection on the secret instructions, which they had given to M. Semonville, whom they destined for Constantinople, will give us a just idea of their views and of their political character.

It will be thought, perhaps, that though these views of aggrandisement may have entered the imagination of the republican leaders, yet it must be found impossible to carry plans of such magnitude into execution; it will be concluded, perhaps, that meeting with a thousand obstacles in their way, and new enemies incessantly rising up to oppose their progress, they can reap from the attempt of so hazardous an enterprize nothing but shame and mortification. We have been used to consider Europe as a body so solid and compact in all its parts, as to defy every attempt to effect its dissolution. That dreadful convulsion, which the fall of the Roman empire produced, cannot again, it is said, be apprehended in Europe,

whilst its different governments are so enlightened, and possess so great a facility for the mutual understanding of their common interests and for leagues of mutual defence. The invasions of Barbarians, as I have heard it a thousand times repeated, are no longer to be dreaded; and, without doubt, for nearly two centuries, the longest and the most bloody wars have scarcely produced any other effect than leaving the belligerent powers in a reduced and exhausted state; hence it is concluded, that no very important changes can possibly take place in Europe; and thus mankind blindly suffer themselves to be lulled into a false security.

This reasoning might be easily refuted by the example of the Romans. I could demonstrate, that if they owed their success to the policy, which they so carefully observed, of never attacking two nations at once, and to the indifference with which surrounding nations beheld the destruction of Carthage, insensible to the obvious policy of acting in concert, in order to oppose that torrent which was successively to overwhelm them; they were still more indebted for their conquests to the nature of their government, and to the necessity they felt of engaging in wars abroad, that they might enjoy tranquillity at home. But the enthusiasm with which they found the secret of inspiring their soldiers, and the care they took of uniting the vanquished nations to Rome, did not a little contribute to their aggrandizement. It would be
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easy to prove that, placed in nearly similar circumstances, the French must meet with similar success; and that possessing over the Romans the singular advantage of being viewed by every people in the light of deliverers they must accomplish with an incredible rapidity, what the Romans were so many ages in completing. But without confining ourselves to examples, which always admit of some exception, let us rest our arguments upon the actual state of things, and the general characters of men.

Let us observe, in the first place, the extreme difference between the present, and all preceding European wars, since the formation and secure establishment of the larger states. In all these wars, your Excellency will perceive, the people had no visible interest, and they can scarcely be considered in any other light than wars between king and king, or minister against minister. The manner of conducting military operations has been rendered more expensive by the important changes which the invention of gunpowder has produced in the art of war; and the custom of keeping on foot numerous standing armies, disproportioned to the population of the country, has created considerable difficulties in raising, and introduced different species of vexations in completing, the recruits. It consequently happens, that every war being so burthensome to both parties, as it exhausts all their resources of men and money, is, from their inability of pursuing it, necessarily pro-

ductive of peace. The present war, on the contrary, interests all Frenchmen; all those especially who, stimulated by false and illusive ideas of liberty and equality, imagine that nothing but a pure democracy can constitute their glory and happiness. We have already seen that they can never want a regular supply of men and money; and though France itself were destitute of both, yet, in imitation of the Romans, they would procure fresh troops from the vanquished nations, from whose spoils they would derive the means of extending their conquests and influence. They will pay their legions with the wealth of the Belgic nobility, and the sale of ecclesiastical property; and instantly dispatch them to desolate new countries, and to enrich themselves with the spoils of Italy and Spain.

In every country the number of those who will receive them with open arms, will greatly exceed those who fly at their approach. Of all the insidious arts used to deceive the people, none is so attractive, none so difficult to be resisted, as the present fatal error which has turned so many heads, and produced so many disorders. Whatever may be said to the contrary, laws and government have been instituted for those who possess property; they alone have a direct and manifest interest in them; they alone are really and truly citizens. The individual who has no property but his hands; who procures his subsistence by his daily labour, requires, no doubt, the protection of

of the government and the law. Perhaps, too, anarchy, licentiousness, and disorder, would be more detrimental to him, than to the possessor of property : but the ties which bind him to the fortune of the rich, and which connect his own comforts with the gradual and successive increase of the rich man's capital, are of so delicate and so complex a nature, that it is no wonder they are so far beyond the reach of his comprehension.*

The people can never be persuaded, that a man who possesses land and houses, enjoys a good table, keeps domestics, horses, dogs, &c. is not infinitely happier than the poor man, whose only prospect is a long succession of endless labour ; who, if he is not a man of the strictest œconomy, cannot look a short malady in the face, or the slightest diminution in the demand for that species of work in which he is employed, without being struck with the dreadful apprehension of extreme want, and all its concomitant horrors.

* The influence of capital may be most easily demonstrated to a man of judgement ; though nothing would appear more incomprehensible to the common people. To tell a common workman that no greater misfortune could befall him, than for him and his fellow workmen to be called to an equal participation of all the wealth of the manufacturer who employs them : to tell the common people that if all the wealth in England was to be divided between each individual, every one must be starved in six months, would appear incredible to them. And yet the truth of these two propositions may be as easily demonstrated as any proposition in Euclid,

The poor man, always repining at his lot, will be apt to arraign Providence for the difference of the two situations. Dazzled by the exterior of opulence, and the appearances of pleasure, he will never fail to imagine, that in these alone is centered all happiness, and that his own sufferings and hardships contribute to the ease and comforts of the rich.

Whenever the desperate proposal is made to him to break through the fence, which separates him from the rich and the powerful ; whenever the means are pointed out to him of being admitted into a participation of that wealth, which forms the constant object of his envy and desires ; the doctrines which flatter his passions he will seize with transport, and regard all those who had hitherto retained him in submission and dependance, as tyrants, traitors, and usurpers. The man of sense, the man who feels the obligations of morality, and the man of knowledge, may love the government, may reverence the King, because he knows their salutary influence. But man, in general, loves to govern ; it is solely through fear that he obeys : and to tell him that all men are equal ; that no other sovereignty but his own does or can exist ; that he is the source from which all authorities emanate ; that no laws are obligatory but those which he has sanctioned by his own assent, those that are the expression of his will ; is not only to flatter him in the most sensible part, not only to inflame his passions in the highest degree

degree of effervescence, but it is to put a murderous weapon in the hands of a madman, who, after indiscriminately dealing his blows on every thing around him, never lays it aside till he has plunged it in his own bosom. A judicious man, entrusted with the same weapon, may sometimes be betrayed into an abuse of it; but so well does he know how far it may be wielded with safety, and so easily can he calculate the consequences of the use to which he applies it, that this alone will suffice to retain him within the bounds of moderation.

Though that class of men which possesses no property, and is necessarily destitute of knowledge, is in every country by far the most numerous, it might still be retained under subordination, if it was not stimulated to revolt by another class, whose constant occupation it is to flatter the passions of the former, to heat their imagination, and to instigate them to innovations. A class, which might almost induce us to lament that ever printing was invented, if we did not at the same time derive inestimable advantages from it; since it is to the invention of that admirable art, that these men owe their existence, their character, and the turbulent passions which agitate them.

And, indeed, your Excellency cannot but observe, that from the natural effects of this invention, and from the different institutions that have been formed in every country to facilitate the education of youth, every one in these days has free
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access to the acquisition of knowledge. The consequence of which is, that an infinite number of individuals without fortune, or in very slender circumstances, pass their youth in schools and colleges, and receive the same advantages as those who by their rank and fortune are destined to fill the first stations in society. If their time of leaving school was to be regulated by the age of entering upon that profession, from which they are to derive their subsistence, their stock of acquired learning could not but be serviceable to them in life; but the vanity of parents, and the ambition of children, concur in opposing this prudent rule; the latter cannot descend to an humble sphere, which would separate them for ever from their happier companions, and the blindness of the former favours this caprice. Hence, because some extraordinary genius has been able to surmount every obstacle; because the application and assiduity of the favourite child have often been extolled by the master, he is already ranked by the fond imagination of the father, among the Newtons, the Lockes, the Montesquieus, the Voltaires, or the Rousseaus.

Your Excellency will moreover agree with me, that if various institutions for promoting education have been multiplied without end, the probable effects which the present system might produce have been infinitely less regarded. And, perhaps, an attentive observer may discover, that in general, I do not say in this or that seminary, but universally

through all Europe, it tends more to furnish society with men of superficial attainments, impertinent haranguers, of a vitiated understanding, liable to be hurried away by the extravagant ramblings of an unruly imagination, than to produce men of profound erudition, stored with useful science, of a perspicuous and methodical accuracy, susceptible of that degree of uninterrupted attention which every analytical disquisition requires: men who, mistrusting their own imagination, are well aware, that it is only by means of repeated demonstrations and successive experiments, that truth can be fairly and successfully investigated.

Hence it follows, that if we except a few, who by the force of superior genius, and formed by the hand of Nature, have raised and perfected their own education, we may see a multitude of men of the lowest class, and of inferior abilities, pushing themselves every where into public notice. Though they are incapable of seizing the whole of a system, of deducing it from its first principles, and of following the chain of consequences through all their combinations; though their chief merit consists in repeating what others have so often said before, in giving to a phrase a better turn, and in expressing themselves, perhaps, with rather more correctness than the vulgar; they boldly come forward, and assert their superior consequence. By dint of intrigues and of every mean expedient, they compel the sensible and judicious few, whose modesty would
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even deter them from entering the lists with such turbulent antagonists, to leave them the undisputed possession of the field. They step into all offices of trust, to which men of distinguished abilities only are adequate. And though the actual state of society offers them a thousand various channels of occupation, so numerous is the tribe, especially in France, that, to escape the miseries of impending want, they are reduced to the necessity either of teaching what they are totally ignorant of, or of becoming the hired scribblers of a bookseller. If their vanity did not stifle every other feeling, they would never cease to lament the unhappy moment, when they forsook the shop or the loom of their fathers. But as there is a prevailing mania for reading, which is fortunately become one of the necessities of life, a regular supply of books must be found suited to every character, and to every capacity.

Your Excellency has lived in so exalted a sphere; your constant occupation has been directed to objects of so important a nature, that this class of men can never have arrested your attention. Placed in the midst of them, and in a point of view which enabled me to form a true estimate of them, I can confidently assure your Excellency, that continually tormented by the stings of envy and jealousy, they would readily undertake any thing, to be revenged on what they call the caprice of fortune and the injustice of men. The competition of such numbers cannot but often detract from each other's talents;

talents; they, therefore, are engaged in a continual struggle to supplant each other, and do not blush to insinuate themselves, by the meanest servility, into the favour of those who have the disposal of places. They shew the greatest impatience to be admitted into the society of the great and opulent, whose foibles they are intimately acquainted with, since they find it so much their interest to study them. If in general they are treated by them with cold indifference, they sufficiently retaliate by the inward contempt and detestation which they feel for those, on whom they so profusely lavish the incense of their adulation.* And as one of the first effects of the cul-

* As an example of the character of these men whom I have just mentioned, I could bring as an instance a native of a small town in Switzerland, who, born without any fortune, but wanting neither abilities, nor some degree of erudition, came to seek his fortune in England about twelve years ago. To his great astonishment his merit was at first disregarded, and after a residence of eighteen months, finding himself in some difficulties, he was on the point of engaging himself as an usher in a school in the country, when he found an opportunity of attending some young men in their travels. He has made the tour three times with some noblemen, such as in England are not looked upon as very rich; who, nevertheless, besides a pecuniary recompence stipulated at their departure, have each bestowed upon him a pension; so that he has retired with a few thousands in money, and four or five hundred a year in pensions. Who would believe it?—thus circumstanced, this man not only allows himself the most scandalous declamations against the great and the rich, but he has also quitted England, and is gone to Paris, where he is become an affiliate of the Jacobins, and has enlisted himself under their standard.

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tivation of letters has been the deadly blow which superstition and fanaticism have received ; as some of the first writers, whose daring genius and brilliancy of parts did not compensate for their levity of character and their want of solid judgement, have availed themselves of the general spirit of these enlightened times, the better to attack religion by continually confounding it with fanaticism ; as the enchanting melody of their periods, an airy and pleasant raillery, and a most excellent fund of attic humour, have conspired to give their works an unusual degree of celebrity ; they have been followed by a shoal of imitators, who, with unexampled audacity, have attacked every thing sacred, every thing which till then had deservedly commanded the respect and veneration of the people, every thing which, after mature investigation, will finally be found to afford the only solid basis on which the edifice of society can safely rest. This deluge of irreligion could not but strike the clergy with horror, and alarm all governments, which, perhaps, have gone too far in the measures they have taken to check the publication of these licentious works. The consequence has been, that open hostilities have subsisted ever since between the government and the clergy on one side, and men of letters on the other ; hostilities which, aided by the hatred, the envy and jealousy of the latter against the great and the opulent, have finally rendered them irreconcilable enemies

enemies to every one who possessed any authority in society.*

This, Sir, is the class of men which we have so much reason to dread.—Flushed with the arrogance of vanity and self-love, in proportion to their want of real talents, they rank themselves with a Solon or a Lycurgus, and think nothing too arduous for their capacities. Having seduced to their party that tribe of inferior citizens, who, from the accidental perusal of a pamphlet, think themselves entitled to decide on the Spirit of Laws; they pretend that abuses exist only because they are excluded from the government; and because they do not possess riches, power, and the decorations of titles, they affect to despise them. Having nothing to lose, they care not to what excesses they may be carried; the French revolution and French principles are the constant theme of their warmest admiration; and looking upon its satellites as their

* On a perusal of the Letters of Voltaire and D'Alembert, and their correspondence with the late King of Prussia, it is impossible not to discover, that they had for a long time formed the project of abolishing religion; a project to which the Philosopher of Sans Souci constantly refused his concurrence. It would be unjust to say, that these writers must have foreseen the consequences of a doctrine which they laboured so ardently to inculcate. Even those, who knew Voltaire personally, agree, that no one would have a greater detestation for the maxims of the new political philosophy, and yet—what a lesson for men of lively imagination! How much is it to be wished they would profit by it!

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deliverers and avengers, they expect them with a sanguine impatience, invite them by intreaties, and favour their reception by intrigues. The populace, being easily seduced and misled by their declamations, is merely the instrument: they are the power that puts it in motion.

This class of men is certainly most numerous in France; but I much fear there are few countries in Europe not infested by them; and, indeed, it can admit of no doubt that they abound every where around us. Yes, Sir, even in England, even in this island, where true merit and eminent talents necessarily lead to the first dignities; in this happy island, where the people enjoy those comforts, that ease and freedom, which are unknown in other countries; in which, if the morals of the people were better preserved, no poor man would be seen without being most amply provided for: in this island, where each individual enjoys the highest degree of liberty, of which men, in a state of society, can be susceptible; you will every where meet with violent enthusiasts, the enemies of the rich and opulent; who being discontented with their own government openly calumniate it; and who, warm advocates of the French revolution, most ardently wish to see it established in their own country, and carry their audacity so far as to form associations for its encouragement and success.

Whatever numbers this class of men may boast in England, though it be nearly composed of all
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those whom we denominate dissenters, that is, all whom the test act incapacitates from holding any places of trust; though, in general, the presbyterians be of this opinion; though, with an unexampled ingratitude, a forgetfulness of what they owe to Government, and of the inestimable advantages they derive from the act of union, the Scotch seem rather inclined to favour it; though all men of desperate fortunes and unprincipled characters be ready to join the factious; yet I cannot but cherish the persuasion, that all their efforts will prove fruitless, and all their machinations be defeated. The English nobility and the moneyed people possess energy, honour, and courage: the inferior classes are not destitute of sense and reason; the two Houses of Parliament are composed of judicious and honest men; and the opposition is distinguished by so many men of integrity, that no doubt can remain, but in an hour of such imminent danger, it would throw all its weight on the side of the Minister, and concur with Government in every measure necessary to prevent the fatal explosion.* It would be, however, very dangerous to be lulled into a false security; as it

* Since the writing of this, Parliament have met; and the unanimity which has appeared in both Houses; the frankness with which several members of opposition have delivered their sentiments, prove, in a manner that does infinite honour to the English, how well-founded we were in not doubting of the part they would take in this delicate occasion.

would be almost impossible, that the storm which has burst with resistless fury on the continent, should not hurl some of its fatal thunderbolts at this country, which after all, perhaps, will be solely indebted for its safety to its situation and maritime strength.

Your Excellency will be sensible, that the natural conclusion to be formed from these reflections, is, that in the present circumstances, in an hour when a general subversion is to be dreaded in Europe, every government should unite in preventing the misfortunes with which it is threatened. I dare affirm it, Sir; the most impolitic of all systems would be an appearance of unconcern. Every plan of aggrandizement, every scheme of ambition, should vanish, where the imperious law of self-preservation is become the general interest of all sovereigns: every subject of complaint and distrust should be forgotten; harmony, union, and concert, can alone save Europe; and unless the most strenuous efforts are used, if operations are not carried on with the greatest unanimity, perhaps two years will not elapse, before we see this beautiful quarter of the world entirely subjected to the will and caprice of an unruly and licentious multitude, headed and directed by men of the most abandoned and unprincipled characters, who hold every thing sacred and religious in the most sovereign contempt.

Let not your Excellency imagine, that the northern powers, Russia, Sweden, and Denmark, will

will be more secure than the rest of Europe: do not think that the distance of these places, and the asperity of your climate, can shelter you from democratic fury. Suffer once these new republicans, this National Convention, these legions whose audacity has been crowned, and whose enthusiasm has been inflamed, by victory, to establish a permanent footing in the Low Countries, to unite them to the French monarchy, to strip the clergy, proscribe the nobility, and drive every man from his possessions. — Suffer them once to overturn the Statholderate, and to destroy the aristocracy of the United Provinces, quietly to spread their armies over Germany, and invite the people every where to open rebellion; and you will find that they will not patiently wait till these enterprises are fully accomplished, to excite the Poles to overthrow the confederacy, which owes its triumph to your interference; that they will court the means to engage the Turk to attack you on the side of the Danube; and that, if it is necessary, they will raise you new enemies on the banks of the Yaick and in the plains of Eastern Tartary.

No, Sir, it is in Germany, that the torrent must be stopped; it is only by opposing it in time with insurmountable dykes, that a general inundation can be prevented; and, perhaps, nothing but the phlegmatic firmness and intrepidity of the Russian infantry can give an effectual check to the enthusiasm and impetuosity of the French.

It is not my province to examine what forces should be brought into the field, and what system of operation should be pursued in a military campaign against them; all that it is my duty and in my power to observe is, that the danger is imminent, and every moment precious. If they once become the absolute masters of the Rhine and the Low Countries; if they obtain sufficient time to raise fresh troops, and derive new sources of subsistence from these conquests; if some effectual means are not found to keep them within their own territories, and to prevent them from carrying their inroads into other states, every thing induces us to believe, that no subsequent check can possibly prevent, or even long retard a general revolution.

Nothing would be so dangerous as to flatter ourselves with chimerical illusions. It has often been said, that all the French armies that have penetrated into Germany have gradually wasted away, and been reduced to the most wretched extremities. But is it to be supposed that the French troops will not acquire fresh re-inforcements every step they advance? They will find it easy to inspire thousands with their enthusiasm and impetuosity, and they will carry anarchy and desolation, under the delusive conceit of the sovereignty of the people, through every part of Germany.

There are many things of which we may form an idea without possessing much military knowledge.—In reviewing the several statements we

have

have of the number of troops kept in pay by the different governments, we must be persuaded, that if they act in mutual concert and harmony, if they are supported by such forces as Russia and the northern powers can furnish, and by the contingents of Germany, the Courts of Vienna and Berlin will be able to bring between two and three hundred thousand men into the field: such forces, ably directed, and acting with unanimity, appear sufficient to compel the French to evacuate the Low Countries and their possessions on the Rhine. For, I must declare it plainly to your Excellency, there are, I think, the most forcible reasons, why no farther progress should be made; or, at least, why the operations should cease as soon as a few fortified places are secured on the frontiers.

I will not say, that the attempt to subjugate a nation, whose inhabitants are all in arms, and ready to shed their blood for its defence, is a chimerical and impracticable enterprise! I shall not insist on the most proper time and the necessary precautions to be taken; on the almost invincible difficulty of preserving union, either between the different commanders of the armies, or between the cabinets from which they receive their orders: but I shall go much farther; I shall say, what, perhaps, your Excellency may consider as a paradox, that even with a certainty of triumphing over all difficulties, and of accomplishing the great purpose of the war, it would be a much

wiser and safer policy, to keep the French closely hemmed within the limits of their own territory.

And indeed your Excellency will observe, that it cannot and ought not to be the object of the combined powers to gain new conquests, which would expose them to endless differences: but let me submit it to your consideration, that the great interest which they ought to have in view, is, not merely to put a stop to this epidemical evil, but to give an instructive lesson to their own subjects, on the dangerous tendency of this new philosophy, and of the French maxims. For let us suppose the campaign of the Duke of Brunswick had happily terminated; that, after surmounting every obstacle, he had rendered himself master of Paris, had given new laws, and established a sounder constitution; that the terror of his arms, and the dread of his vengeance, had forced the French to unconditional submission; yet, it cannot be doubted that this momentary impression, far from producing a lasting obedience, would have embittered the venom of discontent ever rankling at their heart: and is it not evident, that Europe would have been soon deluged with a multitude of books and pamphlets, tending to encourage the public fermentation, and to create new partisans to the sovereignty of the people, and to democratic principles? If, on the contrary, the allied powers had destined an army of 30,000 men to the defence of the Low Countries, if two
armies

armies of 60,000 men each had protected the Upper and the Lower Rhine; if the King of Sardinia had been joined by thirty or forty thousand men, destined to cover the frontiers of Italy; if these several troops, cantoned at short distances, could, on the first orders, have immediately assembled; if, on the first appearance of disturbances, they could have attacked the French in the open plain, without venturing on a war of posts, in which the latter will always find a great superiority; is it not evident that such forces must have checked every movement of the French, and kept them in perpetual awe? If the allied Courts had declared, at the same time, that "they took up arms with no other view than to repel an unjust aggression; that seeing France become a prey to a most deplorable anarchy; though it had been their chief but unavailing wish to see that unhappy kingdom restored to some form of government, yet that they had forbore to interfere in its internal affairs, and that they would wait till the public tranquillity was permanently restored, before their own interests should occupy their attention; and that till then they would look upon the declaration of war, as the desperate measure of a faction." Would not this conduct have evidently appeared noble and generous? Would not every man, who knew all the arts that have been practised to effect a democracy, founded on the sovereignty of the people, and who had penetration enough to calculate its

consequences, have been struck with the conviction, that if the French had been abandoned to themselves, they must soon have felt all the horrors of their perilous situation.

It would then have been seen with what rapidity proscription would have followed proscription;— what struggles for power there would have been between different factions; their chiefs one day exalted to the envied summit of pre-eminence, the next tumbled in the dust, and sacrificed to popular fury. Thefts, plunder, and devastations, have but their day; and the time must be very short, during which a whole nation can depend for subsistence on such oppressive means. Whatever expedients of violence had been recurred to, for a temporary relief of indigence and want, the poor would soon have experienced how precarious are all means of subsistence but those that are founded on labour; and seeing every source from which they had derived their food, exhausted or obstructed, what horror would they have felt at this view? With what remorse would they not have been tormented in surveying the depth of the abyss into which they were thus precipitated? I dare affirm it, Sir, two, or at the utmost three, years, would not have elapsed, before we had seen the nation becoming at last sensible of its errors, and demanding with a clamorous impatience, the re-establishment of severer laws, a more exact police, and a government invested with sufficient authority to command the maintenance of order,

tranquillity, and peace. What a lesson this for Europe! What a blow to the new philosophy! Is it not evident, that the vengeance of the people must have either fallen on the propagators of these new-fangled doctrines, or that, pursued by public indignation, the most painful and lingering of all punishments, they would have dragged on an ignominious life in infamy and want?

I must, however, agree with your Excellency, that the French princes, and that multitude of emigrants who accompany them, would have considered this plan, if it had been put in execution, as entirely defeating their interests. They, undoubtedly, would have broken out into vehement complaints and reproaches; and, perhaps, they would have found many to have sympathised with them, whenever they had exclaimed against the injustice of sacrificing the King and Royal Family to the merciless fury of the populace; whenever the allied powers had been charged with having no other end in view, than to abandon France to its own intestine divisions, that from the ruin of its political edifice, they might each collect some important fragment. These considerations, perhaps, together with the incessant solicitations of the Princes, have induced the Court of Vienna to abandon a plan, which for some time it seemed to have adopted.

If this be the case, some allowances ought to be made for the peculiarity of their situation; for, though it might have been safely objected to them, that

that their want of energy in the beginning of the revolution could not entitle them to hope, that foreign powers should make any great sacrifices in their favour; though it might have been easily demonstrated, that their true interests required the same conduct to be pursued; yet, so afflictive were their distresses, that every dilatory measure must have appeared insupportable to them. Since however, at present, before any plan of operations can be decided upon, the French must be driven from their new conquests, it seems to me, that at least the emigrants should be called to take some part in this preliminary enterprise.

Permit me to observe to your Excellency, that it is matter of much astonishment to many, and not without much reason, that we have heard nothing concerning the emigrants during the whole campaign.

Though in general the world is not apt to form the best opinion of the French nobility; though they are often loaded with numerous reproaches, which unhappily have but too much foundation; though we can hardly conceive that French emigrants, sensible of the fate which hung over their heads, and with arms in their hands, could have suffered themselves to be made prisoners of war, yet obloquy does not go so far as to invalidate their personal bravery and valour. So many motives, it would seem, ought to render them invincible. It affords matter of infinite surprise, that they should

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not have readily offered themselves for some perilous enterprise, which, in other troops, would have carried the appearance of the greatest temerity.

Whatever reasons may have frustrated this obvious line of conduct, whether policy or intrigue; though as some men are apt to insinuate, their secret source must be looked for in Paris, and in the Temple; at present the times are altered, the urgency of the moment must dictate, and unless some indelible dishonour absolutely forbid it, it appears of the first importance, when the present exigency of the times requires the most numerous forces to be brought into action, that, far from being abandoned to their unhappy destiny, and being forced to disperse, they should be formed into as powerful a battalion as possible, even if its support were attended with four times the expence of ordinary troops.

And indeed, Sir, it can admit of no doubt, that, to engage an enemy with any hope of victory, he must be opposed with arms of equal proof with his own; every one must be sensible, that cold and inanimate troops, feeling no energy but that which they derive from the noise and tumult of action, cannot possibly resist soldiers, stimulated by passion, and transported by the most violent enthusiasm.

The emigrants would be the most despicable, the most degraded of mankind; they would be even beneath contempt, if they were not animated by all those sentiments that raise man above himself:

self: if in them all other passions did not give way to the thirst of vengeance!—Let them not deceive themselves; let them not flatter themselves, that in time the delusion will cease, and the nation recall them. Sooner or later the people of France must, indeed, acknowledge their error. But if the emigrants dishonour themselves; if by heroic actions they do not merit that respect which hitherto has been refused them; if they do not see that it is over the bodies of their enemies they must make good their way to their native homes, they are lost for ever!

A change may take place in France; but they alone, the objects of universal contempt, will be consigned to eternal oblivion. Is it possible they should be sunk to such a degeneracy of sentiment, as to look upon death as an evil?

No, Sir, the French nobility cannot be so dead to the feelings of honour. They cannot review their past conduct with much complacency; but point out to them the path that leads to glory, and I am persuaded, they alone will be found sufficient to resist the impetuosity of fanaticism. Had there been eight or ten thousand emigrants at Jemappe, they would have given a very different turn to the fortune of that day.

But your Excellency will agree with me, that it is not by armies alone this democratical fanaticism must be opposed—the weapons employed by its partisans to inflame and corrupt the people, are pamphlets and declamations. And so effectually do they tend to promote their cause, that
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the most unwearied industry is used to circulate them through every part of Europe. A similar mode of defence, therefore, should be adopted; and though the several productions that combat the new doctrines, may possess the highest degree of merit, I am firmly of opinion, that an elementary treatise on the subject would be of the utmost utility to mankind; and as no such work has hitherto been undertaken, a man of genius could not employ his time to a more beneficial purpose.

There are many who read Montesquieu's *Spirit of Laws*, many who in studying history, can examine and meditate upon events, develope their causes, and trace their consequences; such men, resting their view upon fixed and determinate principles, need not any farther knowledge. But fully to comprehend the *spirit of laws* demands a degree of patience and attention very rarely indeed to be met with. Your Excellency need not be informed, that nothing but the genius of the author was visible to the penetration of Voltaire himself.

We look for amusement in our reading, seldom for instruction; and though it were our object to receive information, seldom do we pursue the right method to succeed. If authors mislead the reader by false ideas; if, dreading to fatigue his attention, they flatter his vanity, instead of improving his mind, it is because not suspecting his ignorance, they constantly address him with profound and scientific reasoning. They deduce consequences from some general idea, the truth of which they suppose

suppose to be incontrovertibly admitted; and on this they build their arguments, without having first traced it to some simple proposition, from which the general idea is but an inference. Thus constantly taking for granted, what is most questionable, they fill their works with paralogisms, which may dazzle and mislead a superficial reader, but must fill a man of nice discrimination with the highest disgust.

That the reader may be essentially benefited, the subject should be treated analytically; and considering the inexperience of man in general, the same simple method should be observed towards him which the most ignorant requires. Before inferences can be drawn, the individual proposition should be given, from which the general ideas may be deduced. The object being thus decomposed, after every one of its parts has been minutely examined and discussed, from the effects produced by the reunion of its component parts, just and exact ideas might be formed of the whole. It may safely be affirmed, that this is the only true method of acquiring real knowledge.

The fatal errors committed by the Constituent Assembly are so ably displayed, and the present dreadful evils which owe their immediate and necessary existence to those errors are so forcibly painted by the inimitable Burke, by Mounier, Malouet, Lally Tolendal, Clermont Tonnerre, and even by Necker, that whenever we read them, we cannot

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but feel the utmost abhorrence for the Revolution.* But whatever intrinsic merit these different authors possess, they do not give us an analysis of the first principles; they do not determine with sufficient accuracy what idea is to be affixed to certain words, of which so presumptuous and daring an abuse is daily made. The work which I should conceive most calculated to answer this purpose, would be an elementary treatise, which, having inquired into the nature of man, would consider what end the Creator had in view, when he formed him into being; would follow him through every stage and period of his existence, and would examine what are those several duties which his present condition as man, his dependence upon the Supreme Being, and the relation he bears with his fellow-creatures, impose upon him.

That man does not exist from all eternity, that he does not owe his being to some blind and fortuitous cause, but derives it from a first, self-existing principle, supreme in power and infinite in wisdom; is one of those palpable truths, whose evidence no

* Whatever Petion may say to the contrary, to him it is that the Marats, the Robespierres, the Dantons, and their fatellites, owe their existence—from him, from the too much celebrated Mirabeau, from the La Fayette, the Barnaves, and the Lameths, they derive that power which they have so successfully employed to destroy that party.—This consideration is certainly a powerful answer to those numerous pamphlets which have appeared in England in favour of the Constitution.

man of the least understanding can call in question. Though the narrow limits in which the Creator has circumscribed our intellectual faculties, and our utter inability to penetrate into the nature and essence of beings, render it impossible for us to demonstrate this truth *à priori*; yet I cannot think any one so presumptuous as to doubt or controvert it. It may be considered as one of those axioms, on which all men are agreed: every other system is liable to many unanswerable objections; but here, though we are not allowed an absolute and invincible demonstration, our reasoning is however supported by such arguments as never fail to determine the conviction of men, when they are obliged to reason from analogy.

If it is admitted that man derives his existence from a primary cause, and is ever after dependent on an intelligent and omnipotent being; it evidently follows that his nature and faculties are the production of the same divine power, who certainly did not create him without some beneficent purpose. If it cannot be denied that man is capable of a gradual advancement towards perfection, and that he possesses from his Creator several inherent qualities which can only be developed in a state of society, and must be entirely buried and useless if he lives alone; if it is an incontrovertible point that his faculties acquire their growth and maturity in proportion to the progress and extent of society; and that it must be advanced and civilized to the highest degree, before all the energy and vigour of the human intellect can be called

called forth, it necessarily follows, that the improvement of society, its civilization, the exercise and perfection of our faculties, were comprehended in the benevolent plan of the Supreme Being. Man is therefore bound by an eternal obligation, derived from his moral dependence on his Creator, to attempt nothing that may be detrimental to society, nothing that may retard its improvement, or check the progress of civilization.*

If society entered into the views of Providence, it consequently follows, that man, strictly speaking, is not a perfect free agent; he does not derive from his birth the inalienable right of being solely guided by his own will: it was the design of the Supreme Being that he should associate with his fellow-creatures; and the same right which fixes his own security from the violence of others, protects them also from his wish or power to injure them.

I will carry this point farther; he is not only strictly bound to abstain from the least injury to others, but even prior to the institution of government, though he were controuled by no existing power; yet the relation he stands in with his Creator, forbids him the commission of any act that may be prejudicial to society, may retard its progress, or check its improvement.

* This proposition, deserves to be properly analyzed and fully explained; it appears to me susceptible of a strict logical demonstration.

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During the infancy of society, till men have recourse to agriculture, to furnish that additional quantity of subsistence which an increased population requires; the paucity of his wants, and the facility with which they are supplied, cannot have roused the genius, or stimulated the passions of man; the light of his reason is then sufficient to prevent him from encroaching on others: this will be a mutual security to all. But when population is so considerably increased, as to produce a division of labour; when the long and painful occupations of families have fixed them to a certain habitation; this epoch indubitably supposes an antecedent property. And, indeed, what husbandman would have had the patience to enclose a field, to clear and cultivate it, and to wait for a future harvest, if his preceding labour and industry had not secured him a certain provision for the present, which might enable him to maintain himself and his family, to clothe and reward those by whose industry he was furnished with necessary tools and implements, or those whose joint labour assisted him in carrying on his enterprize.

It is then evident, that property in moveables was antecedent to that in lands. Whilst the former alone existed, it needed no authority to protect it, but might result from simple possession. Each family formed a body sufficiently compact to defend a property, which others would be little tempted to dispute with them. But as soon as agriculture had given rise to property in land, the relations of men with

with one another were infinitely increased: a thousand new wants arose; a thousand new occasions of mutual injury presented themselves. Thus were produced two classes of men, very distinct indeed, but highly beneficial one to another; and as agriculture was indebted to these two classes for its progress and improvement, and society for its perfection and extent, men were soon convinced how indispensable it was to establish a controuling authority amongst them, which might oblige every individual to respect the property of others, and to observe those immutable laws of justice and equity, which, if he had been left to the sole guidance of his own reason, he would have found a thousand temptations constantly to violate. Such is the nature of government. Being instituted to render property secure, its aim is to maintain order, to repress the turbulence of man, and to prevent him from hurting his fellow-creatures. It is the mere organ of the rights we derive from nature; a sanction to those sacred laws, which the hand of the Creator himself has engraven in our hearts.*

When a society or assemblage of individuals have instituted a government, and delegated their col-

* These ideas deserve to be more fully investigated: their connection, above all, should be made as evident as possible; as it must lead to the conclusion that Government entered into the views of Providence; and that it is the necessary result of our relative situation, and of the nature of things. A truth from which all those we have to establish are but necessary consequences.

lective power to any particular will, designed to express their own, this association of men becomes a people, a nation, a body politic, a *city*. But do all individuals who compose this body politic possess equal rights? Is this equality conferred on every inhabitant by his birth? This is one of those pretended eternal truths which the professors of this new philosophy will not permit to be called in question. But I will not hesitate to affirm, that their proposition is false and illusive, and owes its chief plausibility to the erroneous ideas of *civis* and *civitas*, which we do not take the trouble to analyse.* And I think it may be easily demonstrated, that they alone are truly citizens, who possess property; that they alone compose what may be called the *city*, the body politic, the people, or the nation. Public justice, and the protection of the government and the law, must certainly be extended to that class of men which is destitute of property: this is their common right: but they have no immediate interest in the welfare of the commonwealth; their situation and want of knowledge do not permit them to judge what is most calculated to promote the general good: those who command their services can greatly influence, and generally determine their sentiments; hence their participation in the government cannot be admitted: they

* I make use of these Latin expressions, *civis* and *civitas*, because we have no word in our language that gives us their exact meaning.

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must, patiently submit to the laws. And yet they have no reason to complain; as the road to fortune is open to all, and every individual may thus be introduced into the class of proprietors. Those who possess no property, should be considered as aliens, who no doubt greatly benefit the nation; but who are attached to it by no other tie, than the advantages they derive from it, and are ever ready to migrate, if other countries offer better prospects to their hopes. In a word, they are, with regard to government, what the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, are in society, who are incapacitated by the civil law from the administration of their own affairs because they are unable to conduct them. That the institution of government entered into the plan of the Creator, and was designed to secure the property and promote the welfare of the people, is the great principle from which these propositions naturally arise.

From the same source, that is, from the principle on which governments were instituted, we may derive the means of combating the absurd, or rather atrocious proposition, advanced by the deluded preachers of democracy; that even if it was the wish of the people to bring any calamity upon themselves, so indisputable is their sovereignty, that no one has the right to prevent them. Certainly, if the collective body of the nation, without the exception of one individual, were seized with a general delirium, and wished to plunge themselves into the most dreadful of all evils; if it was their unanimous

wish to introduce a destructive government, not founded on the immutable basis of property, or directed to the maintenance of order, tranquillity, and peace; which, on the contrary, by tearing asunder the ties that unite men in the sacred bond of social life, would lead to a dreadful chaos of disorder, confusion, and anarchy: in this extremity the right of resisting the people would certainly not exist; for where the fury was general, there could be no one to oppose it. But does the power constitute the right? If few individuals only could be found, however circumscribed their numbers, however commanding the majority of the deluded, I not only admit the right of the honest few to resist the injurious measures of the greater number; but I will maintain, that it would be their duty; that they would be justified in the means they employed, however violent and extraordinary; would give the noblest proof of their patriotism; and if they fell in the glorious attempt, the tears of all honest men would accompany them to the grave, and their fame would go down with honour to the latest posterity.

If in a body politic, men without property cannot be considered in the light of citizens; if they owe respect and submission to that government which the state has instituted; if their disaffection to that government can find no remedy but in migration; they possess, however, in common with the citizens, several rights which they derive from their condition as men, which flow from the nature of things,

and the beneficent design for which society was instituted : that design, it is evident, was to repress the turbulent passions of man, and to secure him the possession and free use of his own person and property. From nature man derives all his rights. From these also and the mutual relation he bears to other men, originate the laws which secure him in the possession of those rights, and so far encroach upon his independence, by obliging him to respect them in others. If man was free from the dominion of his passions ; neither agitated by their violence, nor seduced by their artful suggestions ; if he possessed energy of character, and sufficient self-command, to consult and follow the dictates of his reason and conscience, there would be no necessity for government or laws ; he would do what the law prescribes, and abstain from what it forbids, without its assistance or controul. The positive is therefore intended to supply the natural law ; which, impelled by his wants, and transported by his passions, man would be apt so often to neglect. It should, therefore, never prescribe, never forbid any thing, but what the natural law, if at any time enforced, would have prescribed or forbidden : and of all the systems of legislation, that alone would be perfect, which, applied to every case, would deliver the same rule which the heavenly wisdom, if it addressed itself to men, would have delivered ; a rule founded on the unchangeable nature of things, and the mutual relation in which we stand one to another.

The faculties of men are too circumscribed ever to form a system of legislation, capable of so great a degree of perfection. Such a system never has, and never will exist. Such, however, is the end which legislators should ever have in view: such is the model which they should invariably follow.*

When it is once demonstrated that government was instituted with no other view, than to compel men to observe the unalterable rules of justice and equity; and that the methods it employs to enforce the observance of these sacred laws, should be solely founded on the immutable nature of things: it will evidently follow, that a just and lawful government, which must command the respect, the submission, obedience, and support of all, is that which, never losing sight of the principle on which it was instituted, tends invariably to conform and ad-

* These ideas deserve to be investigated, and more fully to be enlarged upon, since they furnish us with effectual arguments to silence the democrats, when they speak of the general will, and affirm that the law is, and can only be, the expression of that will. We might shew them, that what they call the general will, can and must often deliver decrees contrary to the laws of nature; decrees which, so far from forming obligatory laws, are only tyrannical mandates, to which we owe obedience no farther than a superior natural force compels us. There certainly exists in a nation, a general will, or rather opinion, which, with a few exceptions, will express itself conformably to the eternal rules of justice and reason—but its voice cannot be heard in a popular assembly; or even in a body composed of the representatives of the people.

here to it; which, as much as our limited faculties will permit, enjoins, forbids, and exacts nothing, but what is enjoined, forbidden, or exacted, by those imprescriptible laws which flow from our nature and relative situation.

What, then, shall we say, constitutes the excellence of an established government? That system which, equally beneficial in other respects, tends to promote industry, and secure its advantages to the greatest number of individuals, is indisputably the most perfect, and comes nearest to the end of its institution. *

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* This truth may be proved, beyond a possibility of contradiction. It results from a very nice consideration of the nature and causes of the wealth of nations, and from observations which few persons have made, and much fewer have attempted to apply. But since so much light has been thrown upon the subject by the celebrated Dr. Smith, there is no difficulty in demonstrating, that from a simple attention to the nature of man, his passions, and his wants, nations would of themselves be carried to the highest degree of prosperity, population, and wealth, of which their soil and climate render them susceptible; not only, if those who govern them, had sufficient resolution to guard against, and lend a deaf ear to those violent clamours, which the voice of party, and of a few interested individuals, never cease to raise; but also, if they had not so great a confidence in their own genius and abilities, if they were not so often guided by their false ideas of imaginary improvement, which has never failed to prove the greatest enemy to present happiness; if they had not the folly to regulate every measure by their own limited views; if they were not so absurd

Does this or that particular form of government constitute its legality, justice, and authority? Is the obedience and support we owe to it, to be regulated by the model on which it was framed? Is it absolutely necessary, that this or that particular class, or the united body of citizens, should possess this or that prerogative? Must the system have been adopted by the unanimous suffrages of all citizens, in a general assembly of the nation? I will maintain the contrary; I will say, that whatever was the form of this government, though all its powers were united and concentrated into one hand, its authority would be lawful. I will go farther; I will say, that whatever cause had contributed to its establishment, whether it originated in the course of

as to prefer their own short-sighted policy to eternal Wisdom; and would attempt nothing farther than to preserve order, peace, and tranquillity in society, and to compel every individual to respect those rights in others of which he is so jealous, and which he expects to be respected in himself.

This proposition will enable us to demonstrate, in the most satisfactory manner, that the greater or less degree of happiness men enjoy in society, is solely derived from the proportionate perfection of the civil law, and internal police. This will clearly point out what we ought to think of the present philosophers, so few of whom have directed their inquiries to this object, so important to mankind, and all of whom have, with the greatest avidity, applied themselves to the political law, a science, where the least mistakes are so dangerous in their consequences, and whose only importance, after all, for men in general, is the opportunity it affords them of gratifying their self-love and their vanity.

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events, in chance or circumstances; whether it was erected by violence, tyranny, usurpation, or even conquest, it demands our submission; and that whoever should attempt to overthrow it, to molest, or impede its operation, would be guilty of the most detestable crime which man, in a state of society, can commit; since his success must be founded on the ruin of his fellow-creatures, at the inestimable price of their dearest enjoyments. Of what importance is it to man by whom he is governed, or by what title, if the power is exercised on the immutable rules of reason, justice, and equity?*

Since it is the sole object of Government and Legislature to sanction the natural law, which our passions constantly impel us to forget; that this end may be invariably attained, those who are destined to govern should be of a nature superior to ours; the weakness of human passions should never enter into their composition. But alas! however distinguished they may be by their abilities; whatever effects their administration may produce on the public weal; still they are men, liable to the errors and weaknesses of humanity: their exalted sphere and the nature of their functions do not exempt them from the sollicitations and frailties of human passions. They only tend to give a keener edge to

* This proposition, which is only a necessary and immediate consequence of the preceding propositions, is susceptible of the same clear and invincible demonstration.

their seductive influence. If they possessed judgment and penetration sufficient to discover the pernicious tendency of erroneous counsels, and to calculate their consequences; if they were sensible that they could infringe no rights without interrupting the prosperity of their subjects, and diminishing their own power, whenever they deviated from the rules of justice and moderation, this powerful conviction would soon recall them. They all sincerely and ardently desire the prosperity of their subjects, and the increase of population; they all desire the circulation of riches, which, by imparting new life to industry and trade, dispense over the whole country the blessings of peace and abundance. This sentiment is more deeply impressed in them, and receives an additional impulse, from the vivacity and ardour, and even pernicious impetuosity of their passions. They do not commit an injustice for the puerile satisfaction of doing it. To whatever depth of depravity man may fall, such consummate villany as Suetonius attributes to Nero, can scarcely enter his heart. If, however, the same effects must always be apprehended from folly and perverseness, to which, unhappily, man is always subject; their punishment is at hand: a total languor seizes every part of the state; its commerce declines, the country daily loses its population, its fertility disappears, and its riches vanish: in the midst of this general convulsion the foundations of government are sapped, and it buries at last in one common ruin the corrupt and traitorous

terous authors of its fall. The numerous armies of the Goths were not the only scourge that afflicted the Roman empire : they were not the sole cause of its overthrow ; but the vices of the emperors, and the dissolute prodigality of their court, having invited them, it was at last abandoned to the merciless fury of these barbarians.

Instances are very rare of a government being corrupted so far as to produce this fatal series of calamities. It is a certain fact, that since Europe has been divided into several governments, all of which possess a sufficient degree of stability, the condition of mankind has been infinitely meliorated. The reason of this, it would not be uninteresting to investigate.* Our progress to prosperity, wealth, and happiness, whether more or less accelerated, is certain. The lower class of the people, though the most neglected, is gradually emerging from its abject situation. It is become the first object of every government to perfect the civil code ; above all, it must be observed, that this tendency to improvement is retarded,

* It may be easily demonstrated, that the Christian religion, whatever may be said to the contrary by these modern philosophers, and however it may have been abused and perverted by interested men, to answer their own particular views, will be found, after every investigation, to be the true cause of these beneficial consequences. Here I would beg leave to refer the reader to a sermon preached last year at the Reading assizes, by the Rev. Dr. Valpy, and printed at the request of the High Sheriff, in which this truth is very forcibly illustrated.

and even often checked, solely by the clamours and opposition of those individuals, who, with the plausible pretence of defending their imaginary rights, and of preserving usages and pretended privileges, often oppose the most beneficial measures and best-concerted plans of government.*

It certainly would be the highest presumption to maintain, that the degree of prosperity which the people enjoy, receives no kind of influence from the particular form of these governments. It must be confessed, that there are particular forms, better calculated than others, to promote the general welfare, which make it necessary for those who govern, to store their minds with useful knowledge, which throw fewer obstacles in their way, when they attempt to clear the code of that obscure mass of useless laws, and ridiculous contradictions, which render the study of jurisprudence so intricate and disgusting. There must be particular forms, which will never impower a set of interested individuals to throw impediments in the way of those who govern, whenever they wish to simplify the public procedure, and to lop off that tribe of unnecessary lawyers, who, having armed themselves with the quirks and barbarous terms of

* These are facts which deserve to be illustrated in as clear a manner as possible. This would not be a very difficult task to a man, who had studied history in a philosophical manner, that is, as it is connected with the manners of nations, their agriculture, their commerce, and their different means of improvement and prosperity.

the law, fasten like insatiable leeches on the substance of the people, and fatten on their blood. Such nuisances as these are infinitely more prejudicial to the public prosperity, than the few imperfections of the political law, which our imagination never fails to exaggerate. But how apt are we to fill our minds with delusive chimeras! Where is the man, uninfluenced by his passions, whose stretch of genius, and immensity of knowledge, can enable him to make an exact calculation of the precise and proportionate influence of any government? Where is the man, for instance, who could decide that England would never have attained her present unexampled prosperity, if Cromwell could have transmitted to his descendants that sceptre of iron with which he repressed the attempts of the discontented at home, and inspired his enemies abroad with the terror of his name! if his descendants had inherited that daring genius, that intrepidity of soul, that decided character, that quick and unerring penetration, without which his sceptre could not be wielded; who could declare that the nation would have been less opulent, and each individual less happy? It is easy to be demonstrated; I shall not, therefore, hesitate to affirm it: England indubitably owes to its liberty many of its most useful laws; it is certainly indebted to it for that energy and activity which so eminently characterise its inhabitants. But, I will not say merely, that an able and judicious monarch, without detracting from his

his own power, might have promulgated the same laws ; that other means might have occurred of infusing into his people the same energetic character. Is it not, also, a well-known truth, that many of those laws which have most contributed to the present prosperity of the English, date their existence at a period when no vestige of the spirit of liberty could yet be traced ? and on the contrary, have we not the best reason to presume, that such men as Cromwell would never have submitted to those popular clamours and prejudices, which more than once, since that period, have extorted from the British Government the most absurd and pernicious laws ?* Would they not have crushed those innumerable obstacles constantly raised by personal interest to the reform of abuses ? obstacles, however, which in the present crisis it would be very dangerous, and might prove a very impolitic measure to remove.

What, then, should be the conduct of a *Statesman*, who, by his commanding genius, eminent abilities, and powerful eloquence, had

* If objections are started against what is here asserted, I would ask of political critics what they think of a law which it is almost impossible to put in execution ; which, if it was enforced, would expose the State to the greatest inconveniences, perhaps even to a rebellion and a civil war ; if they answer, that such a law must be called pernicious, I would beg them to meditate upon the probable consequences of a bill passed in the House of Commons the 27th of April, 1792.

gained

gained an ascendant over the public opinion, who lived in a country where evident abuses had crept into the constitution; where, however, every attempt to improve the condition of the people would be opposed by those numberless obstacles which never fail to impress the generous and the humane with the liveliest concern. If, indeed, he possessed a supernatural power over the hearts of men; if the charm of his voice could stifle the passions, and unite the most discordant opinions; if, without commotion and tumult, by the simple act of his own will, he could produce a new order of things, and, relying on his own superior genius, he could banish every doubt, and dispel every apprehension of its future consequences: under these circumstances, undoubtedly, he ought not to hesitate one moment; he ought immediately to reform whatever he should find defective in the government of his country, and to introduce a constitution, in his judgement, the best calculated to promote the industry, and contribute to the happiness of the people. I will go farther, I will say, that if he wished to establish his new system on a solid foundation, and give it all the stability of which human undertakings are susceptible, he ought to remove even those imaginary defects which constantly excite the censure of metaphysical theory; by which, tho' the general prosperity is not in the least influenced, yet being continual subjects of complaint to the deluded and

the turbulent, furnish them with the means of fomenting the public discontent.

But if he is not destitute of common sense, he must confess that he is but a man, that his knowledge and penetration are not infallible, and that nature has limited within very narrow bounds his means of influence and powers of persuasion; he will see how irresistible are those passions which he must combat, and how unshaken those interests against which he must struggle; he will consider he is not to act upon material and physical bodies, whose impulse and a resistance may be easily calculated: but upon moral beings, perpetually subject to different impressions, and actuated by those numerous powers which the passions always put in motion, and whose effects it is impossible to anticipate: and as he will be convinced, that the first blessing of man in society is government, and the worst of all evils, anarchy, he will be led to conclude, that rebellion against an established government, with whatever pretexts it may be palliated, is either the act of a madman, incapable of foreseeing the consequences of his actions, or of an unprincipled villain, who is indifferent about them: hence he will congratulate himself that he was born in Europe, where governments tend of themselves to their own perfection: he will carry his views no farther than, with modesty and simplicity, to point out every pernicious abuse, and those contradictions

dictions and absurdities which disgrace our codes and different establishments.

And indeed, where is the man of sense, who, fixing his eyes on the present situation of France, would not be struck with horror at the idea of a popular commotion? Were there ever any people more favoured by circumstances; a people that could indulge a fairer hope of seeing all its abuses corrected; of seeing its natural advantages of soil and climate, those which it derived from its government, its king, magistrates, and laws, greatly improved by the accession of other inestimable blessings? Government itself was not insensible to the necessity of reforming existing abuses, and of taking effectual precautions against their re-admission. It was involved in the greatest difficulties; the various wars, embezzlements, and depredations, had occasioned an enormous deficit in the finances. It was become necessary to create adequate resources; to devise some regular plan, which might bring the receipts on a level with the expenditure, and enable the government to liquidate the charges, and to fulfil their engagements. The king had been entrusted by ancient usage with the prerogative of determining what measures should be adopted, and of imposing such taxes as his royal wisdom should think most necessary; but the imbecility of ministers had emboldened the parliaments to such a pitch of insolence and licentiousness, that

they would have thrown innumerable obstacles in the way ; and such was their infatuation, that in the exigency of the moment, recourse must have been had to violent measures. Such a step was totally repugnant to the sensibility of a king, who is distinguished amongst other sovereigns for his benignity and goodness of heart, for his ardent desire of promoting the happiness, and securing the love of his subjects : he revived the obsolete usage of convoking the States General ; he assembled around him the deputies of his people ; he declared his readiness to concur with them in whatever plan they should adopt for the relief of the State ; and assured them, that he desired no taxes but those whose necessity they had acknowledged, and the application of which they had previously sanctioned. The *cabiers* of the different provinces were in general replete with wisdom and moderation ; and if the deputies had strictly conformed to the instructions of their constituents, they would have consulted, and materially benefited the public welfare. The nation was not then fallen to its present depravity : it sincerely desired a reform ; but republicanism and anarchy were very far from being its object ; they did not even enter into the number of possibilities. The Assembly was not destitute of distinguished characters ; several of its members were conspicuous for their probity and abilities ; but the want of energy manifested by the ministry, and the capital blun-

blunders into which it was betrayed, soon brought on that fatal crisis, which, with the destructive rapidity of lightning, has produced a total subversion, and abandoned the kingdom to a factious and fanatical set, who suddenly emerging from the meanest obscurity, have marked every step of their new career with proscriptions and massacres, and every species of unexampled barbarities. Presumptuous and deluded mortal! if this melancholy experience does not afford thee a salutary lesson; if ever the mad hope of raising a fairer edifice tempts thee to destroy the ancient fabric, the Christian may drop a tear over thy misfortunes, but the pity of the philosopher will be stifled by his indignation!*

To examine what form of government is most conducive to the happiness of society in general, or of each individual who composes it, would not be an uninteresting or unprofitable inquiry, were it but to inform our minds on so important a subject. Though it may surpass the reach

* Whilst this was printing, the melancholy news arrived, that the Cannibals who at present tyrannize over France, had completed their long catalogue of cruelties by an act of the most atrocious barbarity: an act of such outrage to every principle of humanity, as to beggar the powers of language to describe it in all its horrors! What a melancholy and memorable lesson for men! But how shocking the idea, that they have not profited by that tragical example which history had already exhibited.

of our penetration to determine the exact period; the present storm must be finally succeeded by a calm. We are well aware that fear alone and terror may settle us at last into a state of quiescence and peace, and that the sword alone will dictate the laws to which we must at last submit: yet it is not impossible to find some happy corner of the world, where the voice of reason and virtue may still be heard, where the people, conscious of their errors, may at last throw off the delusion, and submit to the direction of the judicious and the good. Thus among the military chiefs of France, after the storm is dissipated, and they are fatiated with conquest and destruction, it is not impossible that one at least may be found of sufficient capacity and exalted sentiments, who may feel the noble ambition, and be warmed by the generous wish to heal the wounds of his distracted country; and if he is called upon to be the founder of its government, to give it the best form that circumstances will permit. It cannot, therefore, be uninteresting to throw what light we can on so nice and important a subject; and, as much as the narrow limits of human faculties will allow, to determine the basis on which a government should rest, and point out those certain principles which should always be observed in its formation.

That we may consider this question in every point of view, and display in all their force the

the absurdities of this new-fangled philosophy, your Excellency will permit me to set out with a supposition, which, however, might have approached nearer to a reality, if, in the general concourse of all, the sensible and the virtuous could have distinguished each other, could have acted in concert, and separated from the multitude. Let us suppose, that in the present moment, when an universal terror pervades the whole nation, a few hundred families united and concerted their plan for establishing and perpetuating a safer, more solid, and a happier mode of life than they have hitherto experienced; that they collect the shattered wreck of their paternal estates, enough to transport themselves to one of the islands in the Pacific ocean; to purchase it, and to provide themselves with every thing necessary for their subsistence, till their first harvest shall secure them from every apprehension on this subject; that they have been joined before their departure by servants of both sexes, who, in the hope of raising themselves to a better fortune, and establishing their independence, are content to follow them, and resolved to share with them the dangers and uncertainties of such a voyage: Let us suppose, in short, that having taken every precaution, they have engaged several workmen and families, professing those trades which are the most necessary for establishing a colony abroad. Let us now examine what form of government they ought to fix upon, if, possessing

sufficient foresight to penetrate into futurity, they already consider themselves in the light of a flourishing colony.

If a propagator of this new philosophy was introduced among them, he would no doubt insist upon having a general Assembly; and that each individual should be called freely to give his opinion on the new government. All men, he would say, are born free and equal; they are and can only be subject to the law. The law is, and must be, the expression of the general will; to compel a man to submit to laws, in the formation of which he has not expressly concurred, is to violate the most sacred and imprescriptible rights; to enslave and to tyrannize over him. But would there be any difficulty in demonstrating, that such maxims as these would be wholly inapplicable to our present supposition. Could a doubt be entertained, that the families that had purchased and paid for the possession of the island, that had defrayed the expences of the voyage, and had provided for the general subsistence, alone constituted the nation, the state, and the citizens; that they would possess the absolute and undeniable right of imposing upon themselves whatever form of government they would deem most conducive to their own happiness. It is evident, that the workmen and servants would have no other rights but those which naturally resulted from the several contracts, by which they had bound themselves to follow the
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first families. If, however, the artisans were destitute of employment; if the domestics were in want of subsistence, and their wages were not regularly paid them, they might demand to be restored to their native country, and to be indemnified for all the inconveniencies they had suffered: and even if they were dissatisfied with the established government, if they deemed it too oppressive, they might demand to be sent back to their country, or, at least, to have the permission to remove themselves: the right of quitting a state, especially when its governors enforce the observance of laws and usages that are diametrically contrary to ancient establishments, is an inherent and inalienable right of man, which cannot be contested without the most cruel injustice: but as long as the workmen and servants remained in the country, as long as they lived under the protection of that government which the proprietors had established, they would be strictly bound to respect and obey it. They would possess none but civil rights; the political rights it would not be in their power to acquire, without becoming proprietors by any of the means which the law had prescribed.*

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* I will not hesitate to affirm, that these different propositions, founded on the principles of natural right, may be demonstrated with a degree of incontestable evidence; and that it may be easily proved, that in every country, in every nation, and under every government, men destitute of
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This first difficulty being overcome, it appears evident, that if ever men have possessed the right of determining the system and form of government, to which they will be bound to submit, it is in the case of our supposition. It evidently follows, that the masters of families, who possess property, will constitute a general Assembly, and deliberate among themselves this very important question.

One of their first reflections will be, the obvious necessity of adopting the simplest form of government, as they neither feel the same wants, nor are actuated by the passions of Europeans; for this purpose, a family government will be a sufficient bond of union for their infant society. But carrying their views into futurity, and sensible of their growing prosperity, they will see the moment approaching, when it will be impossible to acquire additional land property without pur-

property, are, with regard to proprietors, the same as those artists and domestics, whom we have supposed to have engaged themselves under certain conditions, to accompany the families who colonised the island which they had previously purchased. The term proprietor must, however, be received with a certain latitude, especially when we are speaking of a civilised country. We must consider as such every man who has a direct, solid, and permanent interest in the public welfare, and is not liable every day to migrate to another country, and to carry his property with him. In England, for instance, the farmers, and those who carry on extensive manufactures, ought to come under the denomination of proprietors.

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chasing it at the ratio of its produce. The fertility of their land will leave them a considerable surplus to be disposed of; the value of their superfluities will be greatly enhanced by their advantageous position for commerce; their population will increase with proportionate rapidity; industry and manufactures will be soon naturalised to their island, and thus they will find themselves rapidly arriving to that period of society, when the landholders, as is the case among the European nations, are greatly exceeded in numbers by that class of individuals that possess no property. Let us suppose, then, that wishing to erect a solid and lasting structure, they have determined to rear a permanent constitution, which may answer every possible exigency of the community in those several gradations of improvement and civilization, which history and experience have taught them to discriminate. In this state of the supposition, let us consider what form it would be their duty to adopt.

We all know, that there exist three simple forms of government. Several political writers enumerate four, which, however, by their combination and intermixture compose several others.

The simple forms of government are, a *democracy*, where the people at large and collectively possess the sovereign power; an *aristocracy*, where the legislature is in a select assembly composed of a few principal and privileged persons; a *monarchy*, where the sovereignty resides in a single person,
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who governs by fixed, known, and established laws, which are conformable to the character of the people; and virtually sanctioned by its tacit approbation. To these principal forms politicians add *despotism*, which they define by a government of an absolute, arbitrary, and uncontrouled sovereign, who determines every measure by his will and caprice. But what they call absolute despotism, is merely the abuse and corrupt perversion of a monarchical government; and it may be easily demonstrated, if the characteristic of despotism is the privation of every right and species of liberty, that there is no simple form of government which may not degenerate into despotism; that it is the continual tendency of an aristocratic government, and the necessary fate of democracy.

The proportionate degree of liberty enjoyed by the subject, does not, therefore, depend on the particular form or system of government. It is not because the sovereignty is in the hands of a single person, because it is lodged in a select number, or in the people collectively, that those who are subject to it are more or less free. When, indeed, can man, in a state of society, be said to be strictly and absolutely free? What, then, is that liberty, which is the constant object of the most extravagant encomiums, and which men only extol because they have formed erroneous ideas of it. It is an universally received and incontestable truth, that as soon as man enters into a state

a state of society, he renounces his natural independence. It is evident, that the protection he receives from the united power of the community, and his own security from the wrongs and injuries he might suffer from others, obliges him to forego the right of injuring them; and he binds himself to observe that honest and inoffensive conduct towards his equals, which he requires to be observed towards himself. It is evident, that this mutual compact between the community, which promises its protection, and the individual who binds himself to do nothing injurious to its welfare, is wholly on the advantage of the individual; since, in a state of solitude, he would be friendless and destitute; and without the means and power to repel external attacks. Hence we may draw this important conclusion, that man, in a state of civil society, enjoys the greatest degree of liberty of which he is susceptible, when he is subject to no power, but the dominion of known and equal laws; when there exists no authority that can compel or forbid him any thing, which the law does not forbid or compel him to do; especially when, what the law forbids and prescribes, is not repugnant to those fixed and eternal duties, which the immutable nature of things, and the mutual relation we bear one to another has engraven in our hearts.

Let us imagine a people blessed with a code of laws, with a constitution, I will not say, totally exempt from defects, but approaching as near perfection as the narrow limits of human faculties will

will admit; it is of little importance, whether the supreme power be vested in the hands of a single person, whether it be entrusted to a few, or to the collective body, the people will undoubtedly enjoy the greatest degree of liberty, consistent with a state of civil society; and the mad and illusive hope of increasing it will be a certain source of future calamities, and a melancholy proof of their blindness and folly.

It will be admitted, perhaps, that a people thus situated might enjoy civil liberty in all its extent. But these objections, no doubt, will be made; what reliance can this people have on the continuation of a blessing, which may so easily be wrested from them? What assurance can they have, that government will constantly turn its views to the improvement of the civil law, and that no authority will be introduced in the state, uncontrouled and independent of the law, which may assume a dictatorial power, and impose severe restrictions upon their will? An assurance, it will be moreover argued, upon which the sole happiness of the people is built, and which can only be derived from the full enjoyment of political as well as civil liberty; now, to insure the permanent possession of this political liberty, the sovereignty of the people must be recognised: it must be admitted, that they possess the right to establish laws, and that these laws receive their sanction solely from the assent of the people, and are the mere expression of its will; that there exist no authorities

in the state, but those which it has constituted, and are dependent on its pleasure ; and that the public agents entrusted with the different offices of administration, are responsible functionaries, amenable to its tribunal, and liable to be punished, if they do not strictly and invariably adhere to the law.

How many sophisms, how many inconclusive arguments are contained in these few words !

No doubt, political and civil liberty must be united, to ensure to the people a salutary government. But if we wish to know what forms the prominent characteristic of political, considered in its relation to civil, liberty, Montesquieu has informed us. It does not consist in the degree of concurrence that each individual gives to the formation of the laws ; nor in the proportionate number of individuals who constitute the supreme power, but in the firm sense and well-founded confidence felt by each citizen, that the government conduces to the public interest and security : a confidence that persuades him not only of the justice of the law, but of its sole authority and dominion over him ; which persuades him, that whenever it is attempted to be violated, he is furnished with the means of resisting that infraction, and of obtaining redress.

If then, to return to my scheme, the heads of families, are desirous (as must naturally be the case) to enjoy as much freedom as men in a state of society can hope to enjoy ; if they wish to give themselves the government most proper

per to secure to the citizen his civil liberty in its utmost extent, to inspire him with that confidence of security and happiness which constitutes political liberty; they will, in the first place, examine if among the simple forms of government there is any one which answers their views.

Let us follow them in their examination of democracy. They will, in the first place, observe that, properly speaking, there never did and never can exist a pure democracy, because in spite of every thing that can be done, the title of citizen, and the privileges of citizen-ship, must ever be refused, not only to individuals, but even to whole classes of men, whom, according to European manners, we cannot dispense with. They will next perceive, that when this preliminary difficulty is overcome, if they should agree to call democratic every state where the sovereignty of the people alone is acknowledged, where all authority originates in them, and where, as now in France, the exceptions which deprive individuals of the right of citizenship, are as few as possible; still their views will not be completely answered; for under that form of government, whether the people act themselves, or name the representatives to whom they confide their authority, it is in either case impossible that the individual should enjoy either civil or political liberty. It is in truth impossible that under such a government a reasonable code of laws should be formed; or if formed, that it should be durable. The caprice and passions of the people,

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or rather of those who are successful in gaining their confidence, must every moment introduce into the legislation innumerable contradictory decisions, which will be multiplied and made intolerable by the tricks and the abuses of chicanery. A little reflection must convince us that such a government must allow the passions the utmost possible scope and latitude. It must give birth to a swarm of ambitious men who, eager in the pursuit of honours and riches, blind to the dangers which attend their ambitious career, and knowing that it is from the people alone they can receive essential assistance, will flatter them in every possible manner, and impel them to act in every direction that may answer their own nefarious views. They will avail themselves of that envy and hatred which actuate the people against those who are distinguished either by riches, talents, or public services. These will be pointed out as the victims; and means will be found to engage the deluded populace to sacrifice them to their jealousy. In a word, it follows from the nature of democracy that there must be a prevailing faction, which from self-interest, and for the confirmation of its own authority, will oppress without mercy every one who does not pay it implicit obedience, and bear down, under the most cruel tyranny, the most considerable portion of the community. Placed under

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such circumstances, how can the individual possess that confidence in which political liberty consists !

If, in this imaginary scheme of ours, it be evident, that the dangers and inconveniencies inseparable from democracy, would induce the heads of families to reject that form of government, would it be difficult to demonstrate, that an aristocracy would subject them to similar disadvantages ? Would they not immediately perceive, that, if it is too numerous, it is liable to all the evils of a pure democracy : if, on the contrary, it is too confined in its numbers ; if the power above all becomes hereditary, it will naturally degenerate into tyranny. As to monarchy, without doubt it does not present such numberless dangers ; and if any reliance could be placed upon the intellectual powers, the integrity, the talents, and virtues of the monarch, it is evident that their choice would fall upon this system of government. But who is ignorant of the dangers of elections ? Who, on the other side, can answer for the abilities and virtues of an hereditary sovereign ? Every thing, therefore, induces us firmly to believe, that from a full persuasion of the evils which attend the simple forms, the heads of families would direct their attempts to re-unite them, and in establishing a perfect

fect equilibrium among them, would lay the foundation of a government, which, while it ensured every possible degree of liberty, would retain sufficient strength and energy, to make the blessings of order, of plenty, of peace, and tranquillity, permanent among them.

Arrived at this point of the argument, the man of an elevated genius would then find ample room for the exertion of his abilities; he might then direct his labours to the investigation of a question the most important and interesting.

I could then form a wish, that he should first examine how far susceptible of liberty man would be found in the different periods and progressive advancement of society. And in this momentous inquiry, I will not hesitate to assert, that he would establish it as an irrefragable truth, that, according to the present state of Europe, it is impossible, without falling into all the horrors of confusion and anarchy, that any government can entrust to individuals a greater portion of liberty than the English derive from their constitution. I could wish to see him weigh in an impartial balance the advantages and disadvantages of this liberty, and point out to us in what manner, and how far, it contributes as much to the general prosperity of the nation as to the happiness of the individual. I could wish him

to shew us how far it may obstruct, as it actually does obstruct, both the private, and the public welfare of the community. In short, I could wish him fairly to examine what England owes to its maritime situation, whether, if established on the continent, her boasted constitution would produce the same advantages; and whether the executive power would find itself armed with sufficient authority. Such an examination would lead him to investigate the various modifications which either the extent of the State, its peculiar situation, or its connections with surrounding kingdoms, might recommend as necessary in its constitution.

The discussion of these questions, as you perceive, Sir, would insensibly lead him to inquiries of the greatest moment: he must establish, in a manner, both clear and distinct, the wide difference there exists between those abuses that arise from the nature of the government, such, however, as a recurrence to its principles can easily remove without injury; and those which are the necessary consequences of human nature and human passions. Abuses will certainly re-appear, whatever be the form of government, and into whatever hands the sovereign authority is lodged. He will, in his inquiry, make us sensible, that in a government of many, the individual who
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enjoys a share of authority, necessarily cherishes in his character, either as man or as father of a family, a distinct and separate interest from that of the State, which requires all private considerations to be sacrificed to the public good, while, on the other hand, an hereditary monarch is the only one whose interest is uniformly that of the nation—an insuperable difference in favour of monarchy, the consequences of which would exhibit, in the examination, a pleasing and important view.

This will be sufficient, Sir, to give you an idea of the book which I conceive would be best calculated to refute the doctrines of this new philosophy. I cannot claim the merit of saying I have formed a sketch of it; I have presented you simply with a few outlines, and passing over intermediate ideas, without dwelling upon consequences, my wish has been to convince your Excellency how easily, by arguments founded on the nature of man, and his relative duties, we may expose the errors, and silence the advocates of a democracy. But the writer who should undertake this important task ought not to lose sight of the end for which government was instituted.

You may, Sir, perhaps inquire why, after forming the idea of such a work, I have not engaged to execute it; but give me leave to observe,

observe, that the plan of a book may be formed, the chain of reasoning, and the series of propositions and inferences may be traced, whilst he who planned the whole finds himself inadequate to the task of writing it.

It is in vain for me to entertain my mind with these illusive hopes: arrived at my time of life, I cannot aspire to the character of author. To treat of a subject, which, besides its great importance, would draw the attention to inquiries of the most abstruse nature, requires the pen of a brilliant and polished writer, who can command the attention of his reader, and oblige him often to pause and admire his glowing and energetic diction. My long sentences, and the long-winded periods of my composition, can never hope to rise to this consequence. It would be the happiness of my life, if I were blessed with sufficient strength and health, to apply the chissel, and polish some of the rough stones destined to the construction of this beautiful edifice. Unfortunately, Sir, the duties required of me, from the situation of life to which I have been obliged to devote my time, do not permit me to think of so laborious an undertaking. I should, indeed, be warmed by the hopes of proving useful; and the subject of my present attention would be the only one

calcu-

calculated to render comfortable and serene the few days which Heaven may add to my old age.

I have the honour to be,

With the greatest respect,

Your Excellency's

Most devoted humble servant,

F. P. PICTET.

READING, Dec. 28, 1792.

F I N I S.

E R R A T A.

Page 6, line 10, for Genus, read Grenus.

— 7, — 5, for families, read first families.

— 10, — 2, for a full stop, put a colon.

— 12, — 14, for bring about, read may bring about.

— 20, — 3, for whose support, read on whose support.

— 34, — 4, for to their wishes, read to the wish of the Republican leaders.

Ibid. — 5, for the reiterated complaints, read but the reiterated complaints.

— 34, — 4, for induce on it, read induce it.

— 37, — 11, for characters, read character.

— 40, — 21, for reverence the king, read reverence the laws,

— 50, — 1, for would be, read is.

— 82, — 1, for furnish them, read they furnish them.

Ibid. — 12, for a resistance, read resistance.

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